



Vīs u Rāmīn, a Parthian Romance
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Vīs u Rāmīn

A Parthian Romance

By V. Minorsky

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§ 1. Texts and References [1]

THE romance of Vīs and Rāmīn has many claims to our attention. Fakhr al-dīn As'ad Gurgānī wrote his version of it some time between A.D. 1040 and 1054, almost nine centuries ago, and only half a century after Firdausī completed the *Shāh-nāma*. The poem is based on an old "pahlavī" tale vaguely reminiscent of Tristan and Isolde, King Mark and Brangane. Many of its episodes echo feelings and attitudes dissonant with the post-Islamic ideas of marriage, women, and love. The poetic gifts of Fakhr al-dīn Gurgānī are also beyond doubt. Whatever the inconsistencies in the presentation of characters, whatever the length of the dialogues and soliloquies of the two lovers, these defects are redeemed both by the purity of diction of the poet and by his truly humane understanding of men's passions, soarings, and failures.

Possibly in the early thirteenth century Gurgānī's poem was translated into Georgian.[2] This is a significant fact, for it shows that both the theme and its Islamic *rifacimento* possessed some merits which equally appealed to two such dissimilar audiences as the Muslim readers and their Christian neighbours of Transcaucasia.

There are several old records relative to Vīs and Rāmīn in Persian literature. The anonymous author of the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* [3] locates the story in the time of the second Sasanian king Shāpūr, son of Ardashīr, assuming that "king Mōbad" held Marv under that sovereign (?). 'Aufī (thirteenth century) [4] knows that Gurgānī wrote *Vīs u Rāmī* (*sic*). Ḥamdullāh Mustaufī (A.D. 1330) quotes the story under the reign of the Arsacid Bēzhan (spelt: *Bīrī*) b.[5]

[1] Wherever convenient I have tried to maintain in this article the sounds *ō* and *ē* which in Modern Persian (as spoken in Persia) are no more distinguished from *ū* and *ī*. I have made some exceptions for the names too familiar, such as Rāmīn (better **Rāmēn*), Vīs (possibly *Vēs*), etc.

[2] The translation, slightly abridged, follows the Persian original very closely. It is attributed (with what reason ?) to Sargis T'mogveli, who wrote under Queen T'amar (1184–1213). The Georgian *Visramiani* has been done into English by Sir Oliver Wardrop, 1914 (reviewed by I. Guidi, *Rivista S.O.*, 1917, 754–6, and N. Marr, *Zap.K.V.*, i, 1925, 118–138). On the late Turkish translation see Appendix.

[3] He was a native of the region of Hamadān and wrote in 520/1126. Ed. Bahār, 1318/1939, p. 94.

[4] *Lubab al-albāb*, ed. Nicholson, ii, 98.

[5] This misspelling already occurs in some MSS. of Ṭabarī, i, 707.

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Gōdarz b. Balāsh b. Ashgh [1] and mentions Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī as the author of the poęm. Mīrkhond (d. A.D. 1498), in the same connection, refers to the time of an Arsacid king whom he calls Shāpūr b. Ashk.[2]

In later years the poem was seldom copied. The famous bibliophile Mīr 'Alī-shēr Navā'ī wrote in 896/1490–1 [3] that in his time Gurgānī's poem was unobtainable (*mahjūr u nā-yāb*). At present there are known to exist four copies of the poem, and two extracts from it. In the fifties of the last century A. Sprenger discovered the first copy in India (*ZDMG.*, 8, 1854, p. 608), and this led to the publication of the text by Nassau Lees in *Bibliotheca Indica* (1864–5). The edition, although based on one unsatisfactory MS., elicited much interest in Europe.[4] Only recently the Persian Ministry of Education charged one of the best scholars of the younger generation, Mujtabā Mīnovī, to bring out a new edition based on all the available texts. In 1314/1935 the first volume appeared in Tehran with a promise of a companion volume containing an introduction, a commentary, and the critical apparatus.

The final conclusions must be reserved to the editor, but an excellent article on *Vīs u Rāmīn* in its new shape has been already contributed by F. Gabrieli [5], and this must needs open the door to further discussion. The Italian scholar has some good remarks on the history of the poem, but he concentrates his attention on the artistic problems, which he treats with great taste and acumen. The present article has a more limited task: to examine the historical and geographical background of the poem, in the hope of assigning to the story a more definite position in time and space.

Let us see first what Fakhr al-Dīn himself says about the circumstances in which he undertook to reduce the ancient tale to Persian numbers. His patron, the governor of Isfahān, 'Amīd 'Abdul-Faḍl Muẓaffar b. Ḥusayn Nīshāpūrī [6], spoke to him of the story of Vīs and Rāmīn (p. 26, verse 29–p. 27, verse 59):—

"They say it is a very beautiful story and in these parts everybody loves it."
I said: "It is a very beautiful story put together by six wise men.
I have not seen a better one, it is exactly like a garden in bloom,
But its language is *pahlavī* and the readers do not know its meaning.
Not everybody reads that language well; nor, even if he reads it, does he understand the meaning.

[1] *Ta'rīkh-i guzīda*, G.M.S., 103, 824.

[2] *ZDMG.*, xv, 665.

[3] *Majālis al-nafā'is*, in Persian translation, edited by A. A. Ḥekmat, 1945, p. 333. 'Alī Shēr speaks of Gurgānī as "a paragon of his time", and says that his *Vīs u Rāmīn* gives the measure of his "perfection and discernment".

[4] Graf, *ZDMG.*, 1869, 375–433; Ethé, *Essays und Studien*, 1872, 295–301, and *Grundriss der Iran. Phil.*, ii, 240; R. v. Stackelberg, *Neskolko slov o persidskom epose Visa i Ramin* in *Drevnosti vostochnïye*, Moscow, 1896, ii (this article of my old teacher is inaccessible to me); N. Marr, *Zap. Koll. Vost.*, 1925, i, 118–138. E. G. Browne, *LHP.*, ii, 274–5, has only a few words on the poem.

[5] Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti, Scienze morali, Serie VI, vol. xv, fasc. 3–4, 1939, pp. 168–188. Also *Annali dell'Istituto . . . di Napoli*, 1940, I, 253–8.

[6] See Ibn al-Athīr, x, 23 (year 456).

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(The story) contains abundant descriptions of everything, but, as you read it, it does not make much sense,
Because in those days poetry was no professional art and there were no sages of quick wit.
Where are the sages of yore to see how nowadays speech is produced,
How meanings are elucidated, and metre and rhymes are superimposed on them ?
In this clime that book (*daftar*) was read in order to learn *pahlavī* from it.
There have ever been people in this clime eager for the sweet words, (and)
If the speech has metre and rhymes it is better than (the pretence) to embrace too much ;
Especially when clever conceits (*ma'ānī*) [1] appear in it, they stand their reader in good stead.
However good and sweet be the story, it becomes refreshed by metre and rhyme :
Like a kingly pearl (which needs to be) set in gold, a story needs abundant conceits and words,
Strewn here and there and shining like stars on that background,
So that the clever and the great read it and learn from it many conceits,
While men of low and middle state swallow it for the sake of the story.
Speech must be such that when it leaves the mouth (*kām* ' palate ') of the poet, it should travel throughout the world ;
Not such as should stay at home and be recited only by its author.
Now, those ancient experts (*sukhan-dānān*) told the legend of Vīs and Rāmīn ;
They strove to say it in *fārsī*, for they *were* masters of *fārsī* ! [2]
Thus they produced a poem in which there were strange terms of every language (style ?).
They did not trouble about conceits and proverbs, and did not embellish (the story) with these two.
But should an expert (*dānanda*) take trouble about the story, it will acquire beauty as a treasure full of jewels,
For this is a renowned story, with innumerable wonders in its details."
When my master had listened to these words of mine, he placed on my head the crown of glory :
He requested me to embellish the story as a garden in April (*Naysān*).
I should tell it to the best of my ability, and wash it of those senseless terms,
For those terms have become obsolete and their days of glory are gone.

Resuming the story, the poet adds : " I have found written in the collections of tales [3] from what the story-tellers said according to records (*khabar-hā*), that there was a king," etc.

This exordium indicates that the story had existed in *pahlavī* ; that it was translated into Persian (*fārsī*) by some experts (*sukhan-dānān*), of whom Fakhr al-Dīn speaks with definite irony. It is probable that they were identical

[1] In the Georgian translation all such " conceits " are presented in special paragraphs headed *araki* " parable ", *hukumati* (**ḥikmat*) " moral ", *shegoneba* " admonition ".

[2] Irony : " were they not ? "

[3] *Samar* means " an evening conversation, or entertainment ". The poet apparently has in view the stories written to be recited for the evening audiences.

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with the " Six Men " (v. 31), and it is likely that they were Zoroastrians,[1] for no one else would have found his way about *pahlavī*. This also would be the explanation of the archaic language they used in their translation. From the term *pēshēn* applied to the translators it would seem that their work was completed some considerable time before A.D. 1054.[2] In any case it is clear that Fakhr al-Dīn worked on a Persian translation which he undertook to prune of obsolete words and to embellish with the frills of the literary taste of his time. Fakhr al-Dīn seems to suggest that he himself had some smattering of Pahlavī.[3] He was a native of Gurgān, and the fragment of a satire which 'Aufī, *Lubāb*, ii, 98, attributes to him suggests that his earlier patron was a Thiqat al-Mulk Shahriyār. The name *Shahriyār* is special to the Bāvandid rulers of Māzandarān. Although in *Vīs u Rāmīn* Gurgānī hints at his mature (old ?) age,[4] it is rather unlikely that he could have been active at the court of Shahriyār III b. Dārā (A.D. 969–1006), after whom there was a long interregnum (A.D. 1006–1073). More probably he refers to one of the minor Bāvandids (*kiyā*-s) who remained in their mountainous haunts and who left a few interesting monuments bearing inscriptions both in Kufic Arabic and in the Pahlavi script. They confirm the fact that some knowledge of Pahlavi was still spread in the region of which Gurgānī was a native and where he spent his young days.[5]

A comparison between *Vīs u Rāmīn*, *Tristan and Isolde* and tales of other similar couples of lovers is a tempting literary problem. Similarities in characters, episodes, dramatic attitudes, and even the basic idea of love sweeping away all obstacles are obvious both in the Iranian story and its western counterparts. But even if one admits that a similar feudal background was responsible for parallelism in the sentiments of the heroes and in the attitude of the poets towards them, such comparisons do not go beyond vague generalizations. Khorasan and Cornwall are too far apart geographically to allow it to be taken for granted that any direct, or even indirect, contacts existed between them. The dependence of the Russian popular story of Yeruslan Lazarevich on the *Shāh-nāma* can be traced, because of the identity of names, as well as because of the likely ways of communication.[6] Such

[1] Similarly to the four Zoroastrians who in 346/957 compiled the *Shāh-nāma* in prose, at the request of Abū Manṣūr b. 'Abd al-Razzāq. See Nöldeke, *Grund. d. Iran. Phil.*, ii, 104; Muḥammad Qazvīnī, *Bīst maqāla*, ii, 24; Taqizadeh, *Shāh-nāma va-Firdausi*, Tehran, 1244, p. 59. Cf. Gabrieli, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

[2] Possibly some time round A.D. 950, when translations into Persian and compilations in Persian began to appear.

[3] Cf. his explanation of the " pahlavī " terms *Khorāsān* and *rām*, pp. 177 and 505.

[4] P. 460: " Oh, how many days since I experienced love. . . . Time (*zamāna*) has changed its former course; indeed its days of prosperity are gone."

[5] The monuments are at Rādkān-i Nikā (Ispahbad Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Vandarīn, year 411/1020), Lājīm (Kiyā Abul-Favāris *Shahriyār* b. 'Abbās b. *Shahriyār*, year 413/1022) and Razget (same epoch): see A. Godard, in *Āthār-e Īrān*, 1936, i/1, 109–121; Herzfeld, *Arch. Mitt. aus Iran*, iv, 1932, pp. 146–7; viii, 1936, pp. 72–81.

[6] Yeruslan Lazarevich = Rustam, son of Zāl-i zar. See Minorsky, " L'épopée persane et la littérature populaire russe," *Hazār-sāla-yi Firdausī*, Tehran, 1944, pp. 48–57. I now think that the likely channels of transmission passed through the Northern Caucasus. The Osset nurses (ясыня) may have introduced them into the nurseries of Russian boyars.

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direct guides are unfortunately absent in the case of the stories of Vīs and Isolde, and the comparisons are bound to remain uncertain and inconclusive.

On the other hand, the obvious prerequisite of any deeper study of *Vīs u Rāmīn* is to examine all the tangible facts in the poem likely to give us a clue to the historical and geographical milieu in which the poem was born.

As late as 1936 Christensen expressed the view that *Vīs u Rāmīn* was a pure fiction.[1] There is a grain of truth in this assertion, but the poem should by no means be regarded as being outside space and time. Those Muslim writers who tried to locate it under some Arsacid ruler were certainly on the right path, though between a pure surmise and a reasoned conclusion there lies a long road of research. The poem certainly goes back to Parthian lore, and our task will be to examine in detail whatever internal evidence, or even mere hints, we can find in the poem, capable of shedding light on its origins. Should we prove that the romance is Parthian, we shall know something of the life and feelings of an epoch which, even in its simplest elements, is still wrapped up in uncertainty and darkness.

First of all we shall have to condense the story to its main features by stripping it of the purely poetical and rhetorical embellishments of its present version.

§ 2. Plot of Vīs u Rāmīn

1. Once upon a time there was a king (*shahriyār*) in Marv whose name was Mōbad Manīkān (?). Other shahs owed him allegiance (p. 28). In spring he held a festival which was attended by dignitaries from Ādharbāyagān, Rayy, Gurgān, Khorāsān, Kuhistān, Shīrāz, Isfahān, and Dihistān, whose names and those of their ladies are enumerated (*vide infra*). The most beautiful of the ladies is the Shahr-bānū Shahrō. Charmed by her appearance, the king offers to make her his queen, but she replies that she is married and has such children as the noble Vīrō, and already her hair is turning grey. Then the king makes a pact with her that, should she ever have a daughter, she will give her to him. After many years Shahrō gave birth to Vīs and entrusted her to a nurse, who carried her to her own home in Khūzān. The nurse had also in her care the baby Rāmīn, Mōbad's brother. Ten years later Rāmīn was taken back to Khorasan, and the nurse wrote to Shahrō saying that she could no longer cope with Vīs's fancies. Thus the young beauty was brought from Khūzān to Hamadān. On seeing her the mother said: "Thy father is a *khusrau*, thy mother a *bānū*, in Iran thou hast no match except Vīrō, thy brother." At the sixth hour of the day Dē, in the month of Ādhar,[2] the mother joined their hands saying that the high priest's (*mōbad*'s) seal on the contract was not necessary.

[1] *Les Gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique*, 1936, p. 61: "... cette œuvre a son charactère spécial: elle ne relève pas de l'histoire ou de ce qu'on croyait être de l'histoire; c'est une épopée de pure fiction."

[2] All the three days called *Dē* in the month Ādhar (namely the 8th, the 15th, and the 23rd) are classed as "middling" in the list of lucky days. Cf. Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, pp. 231–2.

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2. Suddenly there arrived from Marv the king's half-brother Zard mounted on a black horse with a letter from King Mōbad reminding Shahrō of the pact once concluded. He did not want the bride to remain any longer in Māh-ābād, where people dally with women (*zan-bāragī*) and are addicted to pleasure. To this request Vīs objected by quoting a custom of Marv, where women choose their husbands out of two suitors ; besides, the wedding was already in full swing, and she preferred her young brother to the old king.

Zard reported to the king the situation in Māh, where Vīrō assumed the title *Rūḥā* (?), whereas the people called the king *mōbad* (priest) and *dastūr* (minister). Mōbad, in great wrath, called in his army from Ṭabaristān, Gurgān, Kuhistān, Khwārazm, Khorāsān, Dihistān, Sind, Hind, Tibet, China, Soghd, Tūrān, and Māchīn.

At the same time, Vīrō was entertaining his friends from Ādharbāyagān, Rayy, Gīlān, Khūzistān, Iṣṭakhr, and Isfahān, and they all summoned their troops to the plain of Nihāvand. Especially conspicuous was the Daylamān infantry.

In the battle that followed Vīs's father Qārin was killed, but at sunset Vīrō put Mōbad to flight. The king turned away from the road to Khorāsān and from Dēnavar retreated to Isfahān. Yet Vīrō's triumph was short-lived. An army from Daylam advanced to the plain of Tārom, whence Vīrō's representative fled. No sooner did Vīrō march against the Shah of Daylam than Mōbad retraced his steps to Gūrāb, where Vīs sojourned. To the king's envoy Vīs declared that she belonged to her brother and did not want the " decrepit " Mōbad who had killed her father. But Mōbad was inflamed by the report that Vīrō's wedlock had not been consummated.

He consulted his two brothers, Rāmīn and Zard, but in Rāmīn's heart a seed of love for Vīs was sown since childhood. He tried to draw Mōbad's mind away from Vīs by pointing to the king's age and the bride's youth. Zard, on the contrary, advised the king to try two means on Vīs's mother : gifts and persuasion. So Mōbad wrote to Shahrō insisting on the original pact and sending her rich presents, and Shahrō opened the gate of Vīs's castle. Thus the king carried Vīs to Marv before Vīrō could return from Tārom. On the way to Marv Rāmīn happened to see Vīs's beauty and fainted struck by love.

3. Vīs was disconsolate and did not show her face to the king. When her nurse heard what was happening, she loaded thirty swift camels (*jamāza*) and in a week's time reached Marv. She did her best to make Vīs submit to her destiny, but Vīs remembered Vīrō and said : " If I need a husband for love's sake it is better for me to remain without love." She consented to dress up and put on the jewels, but she wept and made a vow that for a year she would continue mourning her father and would abstain from intercourse with Mōbad.

To frustrate the king's desires the nurse prepared a talisman of copper and brass fixed with iron. She buried it on the bank of the river to keep it in dampness, as " cold stops man's strength ". She intended to unlock the

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talisman a month later by burning it on a fire, but a storm burst suddenly over Marv and the flood carried the talisman away. Thus the spell kept the king bound forever and Vīs, twice married, remained husbandless.

Rāmīn, still a beardless youth, was roaming in the garden, longing for Vīs, when he met the old nurse (*dāya-yi pīr*). He besought her for help, while she exhorted him to give up his love. Then the boy overcame the nurse with his caresses and, in view of this new link, she promised him to carry out all his desires (p. 122).[1]

Vīs was dreaming of her brother when the nurse spoke to her of Rāmīn's beauty and valour. Vīs rejected any disloyal suggestions and called down maledictions upon the nurse's town (or "land", *shahr*) Khūzān, which brings forth "only ill-starred sorcerers". The nurse persisted and finally let Vīs see Rāmīn's beauty at a banquet held on the day of Rām.[2] After the king had gone to Gurgān, Rayy, Sāva, and Kuhistān the nurse introduced Rāmīn into Vīs's pavilion and here the two lovers exchanged oaths of fidelity and became united.

4. The king ordered Rāmīn to come to the hunting-grounds at Mount Arvand (Alvand, west of Hamadān) and to bring Vīs with him. They spent a month together, and then the king wished to move to Mūqān for sea-hunting (fishing ? *nakhchīr-i daryā'ī giriftan*).

Rāmīn's camp was in the plain of Māh, and he was about to move towards Armenia to hunt and to combat enemies (p. 163). The nurse secretly urged Vīs to take a last look at Rāmīn from the roof, but the king, who was awake, overheard her. He cursed the nurse and "the town of Khūzān" producing only evil-doers (pp. 163–4), and ordered Vīrō to punish Vīs and the nurse, for he himself, in his anger, might exceed the measure. Suddenly Vīs rose and confessed her love for Rāmīn: "you and Vīrō are my sovereigns (*pādshāh*) . . . but should Vīrō burn me or put me in fetters . . . I am not afraid of pain and death." Vīrō shut up Vīs in a house and strove to blacken Rāmīn's reputation by saying that he was fond only of music and wine; his clothes were pawned at the wine merchants; Jews[3] were his friends. All was of no avail. So Vīrō joined the king on the polo ground. Rāmīn[4] and Rafēdā played on the side of the king, and Arghish and Sharvīn on the side of Vīrō. Vīs looked from the roof on Vīrō and Rāmīn and wept from anxiety. She said to the nurse: "Had my fate been propitious, my beloved would have been none but Vīrō (p. 170, cf. 174, 185), for Rāmīn's tongue is not consorted with his soul, and Mōbad's tongue and soul are equally rude."

5. Rather abruptly the story reports Mōbad's return to Khorāsān.[5] He

[1] The Georgian version (p. 105) paraphrases the realistic hints of the original, pp. 160–1.

[2] The 21st day of any month. Here probably the 21 Mihr, when the Great Mihragān festival was held.

[3] I.e. Jewish wine merchants.

[4] Surprisingly after what had happened.

[5] The poet explains (p. 171) that Khorāsān means "Orient" for *khur āsad* in Pahlavi means *khur āyad* in Persian. The etymology is correct, but the form *āsad* seems to have been restored theoretically from *-āsān*.

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praises the beauty of Marv, but Vīs repeats that " her only solace is Rāmīn ". In anger Mōbad reviles Shahrō, declaring that her thirty children are illegitimate, and tells Vīs to leave his court by one of the three roads : that of Gurgān, that of Damāvand, or that of Hamadān and Nihāvand (p. 174).

With joy Vīs sets free her slaves, returns the keys to the king, and leaves for Māh. Rāmīn is disconsolate and asks his brother to let him go hunting to Gurgān, Sārī, and Kuhistān, but the king sees through his intentions. Rāmīn swears not to meet Vīs, adding that Mōbad is to him " both a sovereign and a God-like (being) (*chūn-khodā*) ", but then makes straight for Māh and again the lovers become united for seven months.

Mōbad unbosoms himself to his mother and imparts to her his intention of killing his brother. To calm the king the old lady tells him that, according to reports, Vīs's real love is Vīrō.[1] Why should the king visit his wrath upon the brother who is destined to succeed him, as he is childless ? Mōbad writes an abusive letter to Vīrō, calling him a mule born of a mare (Shahrō) and an ass (Qārin). Let him not be conceited, let him not put his trust in the armies from Iran, Ādharbāyagān, and Dasht-i Gīlān (p. 187).

The king moved his army towards Māh, but half-way thither was stopped by Vīrō's letter. The ruler of Māh refuted the hints at his relations with Vīs. He reminded Mōbad of the issue of the battle of Dēnavar, and parried the unpleasant reference to his birth by saying that a man's value (*gōhar*) depended on his valour and intelligence.[2]

6. Peace was made and, for a second time, Vīs was carried from Māh to Marv. This time the king wanted to test her loyalty by making her take an oath before a pyre. The flame was flaring up towards the Pleiades when Vīs persuaded Rāmīn to flee from Marv. In ten days they crossed the desert and reached Rayy, where they were hidden by the local nobleman Bihrōz.

The king entrusted the kingdom to Zard and started on a search for his wife. He visited Rūm (Roman or Byzantine West), India, Iran, and Turan. During his absence Rāmīn communicated with his mother, and when Mōbad returned in a conciliatory mood she put in a word for Rāmīn and Vīs and brought them back to Rayy. Immediately after the reunion banquet Rāmīn came to the roof of the royal bedchamber. Vīs put the nurse in bed with the king, who was drunk and fast asleep, and rushed to join her lover. Suddenly Mōbad awoke and asked the nurse who she was. Vīs hurriedly came back and placed her hand in the hand of Mōbad, who craved her pardon for the misunderstanding.

7. A report reached Marv that the emperor of Rūm, having spurned the treaty, was leading an army from Rūm towards Iran (p. 229). Mōbad called in the troops from every town and made ready to march two hundred stages (p. 232). He left the kingdom to Zard and locked Vīs up in a castle built on a high mountain called *Ashkaft-i Dēvān*, " the grotto of dēvs " (p. 233). Rāmīn

[1] In fact, there are some indications of love for Vīrō lingering in Vīs's heart.

[2] Cf. Nādir Shāh's calling himself " the son of the sword ".

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followed the army, but he was love-sick, and at Gurgān [1] fell so ill that the courtiers pleaded for him to be left behind. Immediately he recovered and hurried back to Khorāsān. From Marv he followed the road to the mountain of Ashkaft-i Dēvān, shot an arrow into Vīs's apartments, and by aid of a rope made by Vīs and the nurse climbed up to the " king's palace " (p. 246). There he remained nine months with Vīs. In Marv only Zarrēn-gēs, daughter of the khāqān, versed in the arts of sorcery, guessed his whereabouts.

By that time Mōbad had visited Armenia and Arrān, and obtained tribute from the Cæsar. On his return Zarrēn-gēs informed him of what had happened, and he immediately set out for Ashkaft-i Dēvān. There he rebuked Zard for negligence and told him to unlock the doors of Vīs's quarters. As the nurse heard the noise, Rāmīn had time to climb down, yet on entering the king caught sight of the rope made of garments. In his wrath he beat his wife and her nurse nearly to death, left them in the castle, and returned to Marv.

Here Shahrō plied him with questions and reproaches saying: " in the mountains of Ghōr in Ashkaft-i Dēvān they killed my Moon. . . . O Marv, pride of Khorāsān, . . . if thy water comes from the mountains of Ghōr, it will turn to blood."

The king was impressed by these lamentations, as he was also apprehensive of Vīrō. He ordered Zard to fetch Vīs from the castle, and he did this in a month's time (p. 272). In the meantime, at Zard's prayer, Mōbad pardoned Rāmīn.

8. [At this point there seems to be an interruption in the story. We only learn that] when in the spring the king returned from Gurgān and Sārī he had his palace fortified. He entrusted the keys to the nurse on the plea that former thieves make the best jailers. He then went to Zāvul, hoping to return within a month. On the first night Rāmīn escaped from the army camp to revisit Vīs. He roamed in the garden and Vīs, sensing his presence, implored the nurse to let her out, but the old woman was firm. Left alone, Vīs leapt out of the window on to a tent pitched under it. When the moon came out Vīs found her lover asleep among the flowers.

Meanwhile the king hurried back to Marv: the locks were all safe, but the bird had flown from the cage.[2] As he entered the garden, Rāmīn jumped over the wall, and only Vīs was found on the ground. The king caught her by her tresses, and he would have killed her but for Zard's intervention. Mōbad cut off but a few locks of hers and told her to explain her adventure. She said that an angel (*sarōsh*) brought her from her chamber and placed her on Rāmīn's breast, but that this was only a dream.

The king forgave Vīs and the nurse, and on the Khordād day of the month

[1] The climate of Gurgānī's native land is described as poisonous, p. 237.

[2] Somewhat strange is the king's exclamation (p. 285): " Has she gone to Dummāvand ? Why has she gone while she is herself dignified and has a thousand managers (*pēshkār*) like Zohhāk ". Cf. also p. 174, where Mōbad offers Vīs the choice between three roads, of which the middle one is that of Damāvand. See below, BSOAS, XII/1, p. 11.

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Ardībihisht[1] he was sitting in the garden with Shahrō, Vīrō, and Rāmīn. A minstrel (*kūsān*) sang a song of a mighty tree shading the world; under it flowed a crystalline stream, while a Gīlān bull now drank of the water, and now took a bite at the leaves.[2] The king, though he was drunk, understood the hint and sprang to his feet to kill his brother, but Rāmīn disarmed him (p. 295).

9. As things had gone too far, the sage Bihgōy advised Rāmīn to quit the capital. "With your brother you hold the world: India and China; Rūm and Berberia. . . . Is there no country but the march (*marz*) of Khorāsān? Is there no beauty but Lady Vīs?" In the meantime the king admonished Vīs to behave in a way not to shock her brother Vīrō. Vīs complained of her past misfortunes and swore fidelity to Mōbad. Rāmīn, too, expressed his desire to be appointed sipāhbad of Māhābād, and the Shah assigned to him Ray, Gurgān, and Kuhistān. At the last meeting Vīs showed some coldness towards Rāmīn, but then exhorted him not to visit Gūrāb, fearing he might meet there another beauty.[3] Rāmīn swore he would never forget Vīs.

In his new quality Rāmīn put his provinces in order: Gurgān, Sārī, Āmol, Kōmish, the "march of Gūrāb (Gōrāb ?)" and, the best of them all, Isfahān. When the affairs from Gurgān to Ray, Ahwāz, and Baghdād were well in hand, Rāmīn paid a visit to Gūrāb. He was received (p. 317) by local notables (*sarafrāzān*), Shāpūr (cf. *infra*, p. 14) and Rafēdā (v. *infra*, p. 16). One day on the road he met a beauty and immediately fell in love with her. She explained that her name was Gul and that she was born to Rafēdā (of Hamadān) and Gōhar (of Gūrāb), that her brother was "a marzubān, namely the pahlavān of Ādharbāyagān", and that she herself was the Lady (*bānū*) of Gūrāb. She was fully aware of Rāmīn's love affairs and bade him abandon Vīs.

To the wedding feast Gul invited her relations from Gurgān, Ray, Qum, Isfahān, Khūzistān, Kuhistān, and Hamadān (p. 324). For a distance of forty farsangs there were displays and celebrations (p. 324). But no sooner had the newly married couple adjourned to the castle of Gūrāb than Rāmīn rashly compared Gul with Vīs. Gul cursed Vīs and her nurse. Rāmīn felt the offence done to Gul, and so he dispatched a letter to Vīs to tell her how happy he was with his wife Gul. Mōbad took the letter from the messenger and handed it to Vīs. Seeing her lady's pain, the nurse undertook to travel to Gūrāb, but Rāmīn, whom she found on the hunting-ground, bade her tell Vīs that husbands are the best for wives and sent the old woman away.

10. In despair Vīs ordered the scribe (*dabīr*), the noble (*āzāda*) Mushkēn, to write a letter to Rāmīn. This he did in an epistle consisting of an "address", ten discourses, and a special "praise" (*durūd*) of the fickle-hearted lover

[1] I.e. on the sixth day of the second month, which is but a "middling" day (Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, 219). Festivals come in Ardībihisht only on the 3rd and the 26th day.

[2] Similarly Khusrau Anōsharvān saw in his dream that a boar thrust his muzzle into his goblet; Christensen, *Les gestes des rois*, p. 65.

[3] Vīs may have seen Gul during her stay in Gūrāb (p. 66). The original story may have had more details.

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(pp. 347–383). One of Mushkēn's similes is noteworthy: "If they call Ārish an able archer (*kamān-gīr*) because he shot an arrow from Sārī to Marv, you send every hour one hundred far-flying arrows from Gūrāb right into my soul" (p. 366).

Vīs sends the letter to her lover by Ādhēn, to whom she says: "until this day you have been a servant (*chākar*); henceforth you will be my noble (*āzāda*) brother." [1] The oral message which Ādhēn was told to deliver (pp. 384–6) was very different from the lofty contents of Mushkēn's letters. Vīs accused Rāmīn of perjury. She astutely praised Mōbad, whose power is but nominal, while the treasury is under her orders, and asked if she has ever refused anything to her lover. Gul ("the flower") will last but a moment, and in Marv there is a rose-garden with a rose more beautiful than the moon on the fourteenth night.

Meanwhile Rāmīn grew homesick and weary of Gul. His father-in-law Rafēdā overheard his lamentations and warned his daughter. As Rāmīn was riding his Rakhsh on the road to Khorasan (p. 404), to breathe the aroma [2] wafted by the eastern breeze and reminding him of Vīs, suddenly Ādhēn appeared before him and handed him the letter together with Vīs's veil and shift.

Ādhēn took Rāmīn's answer to Marv, and Rāmīn himself hurried after him. When the watchman (*dīda*) announced the coming of Rāmīn, the nurse, using a charm, put the king to sleep, and Vīs went to the window. It was winter, and Rāmīn remained in the snow and rain, while Vīs, seeming to address his steed Rakhsh, spoke out her reproaches to the unfaithful lover. Rāmīn replied [and the verbal duel goes on to the length of 550 verses (pp. 416–447)].

Rakhsh stood up to his knees in the slush (p. 424) until Rāmīn lost patience and rode away (p. 448). Then Vīs sent the nurse to stop him, and herself hastened to join him in night and storm. [The outpouring of reproaches and explanations continues for another 267 verses, pp. 452–463.]

The lovers were reconciled only towards the morning, when they repaired to the castle (*kūshk*), and there Rāmīn remained hidden with Vīs for a month. The king did not know that Rāmīn was in the palace "drinking from the same goblet as himself and dissecting his good name with the sword of vilification" (p. 468).

As the days of spring were drawing near, Rāmīn came out of his retreat and from the nearest stage re-entered Marv openly. He greeted the king, saying that he had put in order the affairs of Gurgān and Kuhistān and had destroyed the king's enemies throughout Mosul, Syria, and Armenia. The king bade Rāmīn stay in Marv, and after three months (p. 471) wanted to take him to the hunting-places in Gurgān. The thought of this new separation upset Vīs. Rāmīn feigned an attack of gout and at the first stage stayed in bed.

11. Left alone in Marv, Vīs plied the nurse with the story of her woes. The

[1] But on p. 29 Ādhēn is already called *nāmī*.

[2] P. 404: the aroma of Khirkhīz (= musk), Samandūr (= aloes), and Fanchūr (= camphor).

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old woman told her to be happy so long as she had in her house (*andar khāna*) a mother like Shahrō and a brother like Vīrō. It was true that the king was full of wrath and enmity and at any moment might come out of his ambush, but one day the king and the *sālār* (Zard) might disappear; then Vīrō would be the best helper, and along with him the other "shahs" dissatisfied with Mōbad. The king and the army were gone from Marv. The keys of the treasury were in Vīs's hands; let her buy kingship and power with the dīnārs. Let her recall Rāmīn, and, when he comes, oust the king. So Vīs wrote a letter to Rāmīn calling him back to Marv.

At night Rāmīn left the camp in Gurgān with forty stalwarts, and in a week arrived in Marv. His messenger, disguised as a woman, went to see Vīs. The commandant of the palace [1] was the sipāhbad Zard, the king's brother and minister. Vīs told him of her desire to visit the fire-temple built by Jamshēd for a thanksgiving ceremony, as she had seen in a dream that Vīrō was restored to health after an illness. At the temple she was joined by Rāmīn and his forty men, who in women's attire followed her into the citadel (*kuhdiz*). At night Rāmīn stealthily slipped to Zard's bedside, but Zard awoke in time. Rāmīn implored him to surrender, but Zard, with curses, struck him with his sword. Then Rāmīn killed his half-brother and seized the castle.

The treasure was loaded on camels, and doubling the stages Rāmīn and Vīs had arrived in Qazvīn when the king first heard what had happened. From Qazvīn Rāmīn entered Daylam. This country possessed an army of Daylamites and Gēls, all mighty archers and javelin-throwers. On a dark night they slay from far by the sound of (their victims') voices. They are like *dēvs* at the moment of attack and "the world is still in ruins from their violence". They have huge shields painted in a hundred colours. Urged by ambition, they fight among themselves continuously. "From Adam's times until now" no king has ever conquered them, and their march (*marz*) has remained "virgin".

Rāmīn met in Daylam only goodwill and sat on the throne of happiness. He had spread a cow's hide and on it placed fifty bags (*badra*) of silver and gold, and an innumerable army was attracted by his gallantry and his dīnārs. He was obeyed by the notables of his entourage such as *Kishmēr, Ādhēn, Vīrō, Bahrām, Ruhhām, Sām, and Gēlō.[2] Other shahs sent him armies from every part. Rāmīn's great *sipāhdār* was Vīrō; his vazir and steward (*qahramān*) was Gēlō.

The army did not like Mōbad, but he decided to fight Rāmīn, and from Gurgān moved to Āmol. One night, as he was banqueting with his chiefs and distributing money to the men, a wild boar appeared from the bank of the stream and the king attacked him on his polo-horse. He used a short lance (*khisht*), but missed the beast, and the boar brought down the horse and the rider and gored the king to death.

[1] *Kōtvāl*, an Indian term possibly reflecting the time of Maḥmūd's conquests.

[2] *Var.* *Kishmēr-yal, Ādhēn, Vīrō, his kind vazir Sām and Gēlō.

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Rāmīn thanked God that war and bloodshed were avoided and swore to be a good ruler. From Daylam he came to Āmol, where the chiefs proclaimed him *shahinshāh*.

12. He gave Ṭabaristān to Ruhhām, who was a noble man of Kayānī origin ; he gave Rayy to Bihrōz, who was his well-wisher and adviser (*nēk-āmōz*) and who had given asylum to him and Vīs ; he gave Gurgān to his old friend Ādhēn. At headquarters Vīrō became *sipāhbad*, and his brother Shērō the mayor of the palace (*sarhang-i sarāy*). Each town was given to a shah, and a protector (*nigāhbān*) was sent to each march (*marz*).

Rāmīn's dominion extended from China to Berberia. Order and happiness obtained everywhere. The world was rid of Kurds and Lūrs, highwaymen and rogues. The shah visited now Khorāsān, now Kuhistān, now Ṭabaristān, and now Khūzistān and Baghdād (*sic*).[1] Among the cities built by him was Ahwāz, which was called *Rām-shahr*, as it appears in the registers ; it was pleasant to live in and had a pleasant name, for " in their language *rām* means *khush* " (f. 505). Rāmīn also improved the harp, which was called *chang-i Rāmēnēn*.

Rāmīn and Vīs had two sons, Khurshēd and Jamshēd. To the former the East (*khāvar*) was given, namely Soghd, Khwārazm, and Chaghān ; to the second, the West (*bākhtar*), namely Syria, Egypt, and Qayruwān. All the world was in the hands of Vīs, but her household domain (*khāṣṣ*) was Ādharbāyagān, Arrān, and Armenia.

Rāmīn lived 110 years, out of which 83 years he ruled in his own right (*shāh-i zamān*). With Vīs Rāmīn lived 83 years [2], and when she died he had a *dakhma* built for her, erected over the fire-temple Burzīn.[3] On the Naurōz day he put on the throne his son Khurshēd and crowned him with the *tāj-i Kayānī*. He lived three more years under the shadow of Vīs's *dakhma*. In it he was finally buried, and the souls (*ruvān*) of the ancient lovers went to Mīnō.

The poet concludes by saying that God gave kingship to Rāmīn only when he ceased to be a slave of his passions (*āz*).

§ 3. Dramatis Personæ

As can be seen, the main groups of the *dramatis personæ* centre round Marv and the region called Māh (Media).

To the former group belong the king of kings Mōbad, his brother Rāmīn (*alias* Rāmīna and Rām), and his half-brother Zard. The unnamed mother of Mōbad and Rāmīn appears on the stage at critical moments to pour oil on the troubled waters (pp. 183, 208). Zard was born of an Indian mother (p. 206), and he more often appears as Mōbad's *vazīr* and *sipāhbad* than as a prince. He himself says (p. 50) : " I am one of the shah's men ; at his court I am one

[1] N. Lees, 395 : " now to the Shūristān of Baghdād " (read : **Sūristān* " Assyria ").

[2] Thus in N. Lees : " eighty-three " ; Wardrop and Minovi : " eighty-one."

[3] p. 508 : *bar-avarda az ātash-gāh-i Burzīn* (?). From the following verses it appears that Rāmīn built both the *dakhma* and the fire-temple.

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of the army leaders." Mōbad's queen, Sahī, is quoted only once, at the bottom of the list of the invited guests!

The king's name, Mōbad, is unexpected, for no other source supports the idea that kingly and priestly functions in Marv were confused.[1] We have to take it for a personal name, although bearing in mind that the discontented people of Māh called the king *mōbad* and *dastūr*, here definitely " the priest—minister ". This might suggest some flaw in Mōbad's pedigree, although his ancestors are said to have been kings since Adam's time (p. 128).[2] The king's title is *shahinshāh* " king of kings ", lord of Iran and Turan, whose dominions, in his mother's words, extended from China to Qayruwān (in Northern Africa). In the new edition the name of the king is followed by the patronymic منیکان,[3] *Manīkān* or *Manēkān*, i.e. descended from Manīk (Manēk), a name not directly attested either in Persian history or in epic tradition. In any case, it is an important indication, and we shall fully discuss it in our conclusions.

The text gives also a list of Mōbad's knights, and later enumerates those who passed over to Rāmīn.

p. 29	*pp. 495–6*
Bahrām	Bahrām
Ruhhām Ardabīlī	Ruhhām
Gushāsp Daylamī	
Shāpūr Gēlī	
*Kishmēr-i yal	Kishmēr
Ādhēn	Ādhēn
Vīrō (son of Shahrō)	Vīrō (sipāhbad)
Rāmīn (the king's brother)	
Zard (ditto)	
	Sām
	Gēlō (vazīr, son of Shahrō ?)

In the *Shāh-nāma* the name Ruhhām (Rahām ?) is borne by a famous son of Gōdarz; and the fact that our Ruhhām is said to be of Kayānian origin seems to be a hint at his connection with the hero of the lore of Kay Khusrau (*vide infra*). The name *Kishmēr-i yal*, i.e. " Kishmēr the hero " (or *Kishmēr-yal*, " the hero of Kashmīr ") sounds epic as well (*vide infra*, p. 759).

The list of the beauties who attended Mōbad's festival is also characteristic, though it has considerable variants in the manuscripts and in the Georgian translation.[4] Mīnovī, 31, quotes :—

Shahrō Māh-dukht, *alias* Shahr-bānū
Sarv-i Āzād of Ādharbāyagān
Āb-i Nōsh of Gurgān

[1] It is true that in *Vend.*, i, 6, Marv is called *Mourum sūrəm artāvanəm* " the strong, the righteous ". In *Ayātkār-i Zarērān*, ed. Pagliaro, Roma, 1925, § 19, it is called Zaratushtrian *Murv-i Zaratuštān*). For an explanation of the king's name see below, vol. XII/1, p. 9.

[2] On p. 29 the poet says that at the celebration of the Naurōz " the divine halo " (*farr-i khudā'ī*) was flashing from Mōbad's countenance, but this may be but a common formula carrying no special weight in a general description of the festival.

[3] In N. Lees : *niyāgān* " ancestors " is surely a mistake.

[4] See N. Marr's collation of N. Lees with the Georgian, p. 34.

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Nāz-i dilbar of Dihistān
Dīnār-gēs of Rayy
Zarrēn-gēs (daughter of the khāqān ?, cf. pp. 252–4)
Shīrēn (from Būm-i kōh) [1]
Parī-Vīs (ditto : different from Vīs) [1]
Āb-nār (of the family of the vazirs of Isfahan)
Āb-Nāhēd (ditto)
Dukht-i Kanārang (from Sāva ?)
Sahī, wife of the shah

Kanārang is a purely Khorasanian title. Therefore *Sāva*, in the Teheran text, is impossible. The Indian edition, p. 31, has

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which also needs correction (*vide infra*, p. 18). Between *dukht-i kanārang* and the " wife of the shah " the Indian edition inserts : Shakarlab Nōsh (or, Nōsh-with-sugar-lips) from the land of *Humāvan :—

شکرلب نوش از بوم هماون * سمن رنگ و سمن بوی و سمن تن

The genuineness of the verse is supported by the Georgian translation (p. 6). The highlands of *Humāvan are known in the *Shāh-nāma* (Tehran ed., iii, 450 ; iv, 895–906 ; v, 1431) as the place of many famous battles between the Iranians and Turanians under Kay Khusrau (*vide infra*, p. 760).

The second princely family is that of Māh (Media). Its head Qārin is not mentioned among Mōbad's guests (p. 29), and he falls in battle at the beginning of the story. He appears chiefly as his wife's husband. The latter calls him a *khusrau* (p. 42), yet his son Vīrō does not rebut Mōbad's allegation that his " mother is of better origin than his father " (p. 191). The name Kārēn is that of a noble Arsacid family, connected with Media (see vol. XII/1, p. 10), although in later times many persons called Qārin were found among the princely families of Ṭabaristān (*see ibid.*, p. 11).

Qārin's wife Shahrō was descended from the ancient Pēshdādian king Jamshēd (p. 118), and she is referred to (pp. 32, 36) as *Shahr-bānū* " royal princess ", or even " queen ", *Māh-dukht* " princess of Media " (p. 31) and *Māh-i bānuvān* " the Moon of the Ladies ". Her name stands at the head of the list of Mōbad's guests (p. 31). The foul-mouthed Mōbad, in a fit of anger, insinuates that Shahrō's " thirty " children are all illegitimate,[2] and among them names Īzad-yār, Ērān-shah, Rōyēn, Nār, Āb-i nāz, Vīs (and ?) Shīrēn. The Indian edition (p. 121) quotes moreover Ādharbād, Farrukh-zād, Vīrō, Bahrām, Sāsān, and Gēlō.[3] Of these only Vīrō and Gēlō take an active part in the story.

[1] It is difficult to say whether Būm-i Kōh stands here for Kuhistān (= Media), or for some other Kuhistān (Southern Khorasan, or the highlands of the upper Murghāb, cf. p. 54) The two brides might be Shahrō's elder daughters referred to by Mōbad (p. 121), although Shahrō herself (p. 35) denies having borne any daughters.

[2] He forgets that he himself had applied for Shahrō's love without any success. On p. 201 he blesses Vīs as the offspring " of Qārin's loins ".

[3] The Georgian version (p. 116) reduces the list to Adrabad, P'araxzad, Viprond, Abanoz, Vis, and Shirin. The additional names of the Indian editions are possibly a later addition. The

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Vīrō, who succeeded his father Qārin, is spoken of as " shah and shah-zāda " (p. 94). With his usual malice Mōbad says to him (p. 186): " thou art a lion in the region of Māh, outside it a fox would humble thee," and challenges him to call troops from Iran, Ādharbāyagān, and the plain (lowlands ?) of Gīlān.

The youngest daughter of Shahrō is Vīs, or Vīsa. In a MS. her name is spelt *Vaysa*, i.e. **Vēsa*, but the form Vīs is supported by the rhyme *Iblīs* (pp. 142, 229), and the Georgian translator (who distinguishes between *ē* and *ī*, *ō* and *ū*) spells it with *i*. The name does not occur elsewhere in Persian tradition, but Vēsa is known as a man's name in Turan.[1]

An episodic rôle is assigned in the poem to the notables (*sarafrāzān*) of Gūrāb, Shāpūr, and Rafēdā (رفیدا in the Georgian version: *Rafeda*). The latter's wife is Gōhar from Hamadan and their daughter is Gul [2], whom Rāmīn marries during his separation from Vīs. In the polo-match Rafēdā plays in a team of twenty with Mōbad and Rāmīn, against the team of Vīrō comprising Arghish and Sharvīn. The name *R.fydā* is a complete puzzle. It may have been misread by the " six translators " of the story from Pahlavi into Modern Persian (*vide supra*, p. 744).[3]

Another lesser chief is Bihrōz b. Shērō of Rayy. The text does not suggest that he was governor before Rāmīn's enthronement. In Parthian times Rayy was the fief of the Mihrānids.

Among the courtiers of Marv the story mentions Bihgōy, a clever adviser, as his name suggests; the noble scribe Mushkēn, whose name may contain a hint at the blackness of the ink he uses; and Ādhēn, who is not so noble, but whom Vīs ennobles for being her confidant and messenger. All these names are purely conventional and unimportant.

In a story so avowedly belonging to the class of court-poetry and never descending from the level of kings and princesses, the sole representative of the lower classes is the nurse. She is known only by her name of origin (*nisba*), Khūzānī. The sinister part she plays in the events, and especially her sorcery, are, however, attributed not to her low station but to her origin from Khūzān. In fact, she is an expert in witchcraft, as illustrated by such episodes as the preparation of the charm to render Mōbad impotent.

Apart from the heroes and the lesser personages of the story, Gurgānī quotes a number of names taken from the general stock of Iranian history and

name " Sāsān " would suggest some relations between the house of Māh and Fārs. One remembers that Iṣṭakhr is one of the places from which Vīrō draws his auxiliaries, *vide infra*, p. 35.

[1] Vēsa, father of Pīrān, was apparently the ruler of Khottal (ختل), which name was later confused with Khotan (ختن). Vēsakirt is a town in Khuttal, but in the *Shāh-nāma* the residence of Pīrān, son of Vēsa, is at Khotan ! Cf. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, 227.

[2] Her rôle is similar to that of Isolde-the-White-hand of the story of Tristan (Ethé).

[3] Cf. Avestan *rapiθwā* " midday, south ", *rafəδra* " support " (in Pahlavi translation *rāmishn*, *rāmēnītarīh*). It is also possible that the name, or a part of it, was originally spelt in Aramaic, meant to be pronounced in Pahlavi. The *Frahang-i Pahlavik* gives *lpyt'* (**r.pētā*) in the meaning " a girl ", and *lpy'* (**r.pyā*) " a boy " (H. W. Bailey).

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mythology.[1] Only a reference to the famous archer Ārish has a claim to our attention (*vide infra*, p. 20).

§ 4. Geographical Background

1. The empire of Marv
2. Western Khorāsān (Parthia)
3. Media, Gūrāb, Daylam, and the West
4. Geographical similes

1. The most obvious and striking fact in the background of *Vīs u Rāmīn* is that the action unfolds exclusively in Northern Iran. The events take place in an area extending from Eastern Khorāsān to Media, or more exactly from Marv to Hamadān, with a stress on the former. The south is out of the picture, except for some casual references to Fārs, Shīrāz (an Islamic creation!), and Kirmān (pp. 57, 29, and 402). It is the house of Māh which has more connections with the south (pp. 57 and 324).

The great king's residence is in Marv-i Shāyagān, or Shāhijān (" Marv-the-palace "), p. 205. Khorāsān (p. 171) and Marv (p. 413) have special praises. If in their moment of despair (pp. 126, 207) the heroes call Marv " dirty " (*ganda* " stinking "), its usual epithet is (p. 90) " select " (*guzīn*), and on p. 50 the poet quotes a praiseworthy custom of Marv. The river of Marv is said to come from Ghōr [2] and to flow past the castle of *Ashkaft-i Dēvān*. This latter detail seems to refer to one of the numerous artificial grottoes found in the hilly reaches of the Murghāb (in Pandjih, Marūchāq, Singlak, etc.).[3] In fact these caves are still known as *dēv-kan* " dug by the devs ".

To the north-west of Marv, in the Caspian region, lie the hunting-grounds whither the *shahinshāh* repairs in spring. On a special expedition he pushes forward into Sārī (p. 273) and Āmol (p. 497), belonging to Ṭabaristān.

In the west Isfahān seems to be under Marv (pp. 31, 69), and it is praised (p. 316) as the best of Rāmīn's fiefs.

In the south Zāvul is within the radius of King Mōbad's activities, although the hint is left undeveloped (p. 274). Originally this name belongs to Ghaznī, but eventually may be taken for Sīstān.

The outer ring of the king's eastern vassals appears in the list of places from which he draws his troops before marching on Māh (p. 54): " Ṭabaristān, Gurgān, Kuhistān, Khwārazm, Khorāsān, Dihistān, as well as Sind, Hind, Tibet, China, Soghd, and the confines of Tūrān and Māchīn (Mahāchīna)." In this list Kuhistān possibly refers not to Media but to the highlands of the upper courses of the Murghāb and the Heri-rūd (*vide supra*, p. 755). The second part of the list looks fantastic, but finds some explanation in the light of our general conclusions (see vol. XII/1, p. 6).

[1] Hūshang (130), Jamshēd (118, 438, 491), Zohāk (285, 430), Bēzhan (230), Khusrau Nūshīrvān (129, 184, 395, 472, 504, 506), Ārish (255, 322, 366, 398).

[2] It would be more exact to say " from Gharchistān, bordering on Ghōr ".

[3] Supposed to be of Buddhist origin, see de Lassoë, Talbot and W. Simpson, " Discovery of Caves on the Murghāb," *JRAS.*, 1885, 92–102.

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A purely imaginary note is struck in the strange episode of Mōbad's search for Vīs throughout the world (p. 203), " both inhabited and uninhabited." [1] No better is the assertion that the king's sway in the west extended down to Qayruwān and Berberia (pp. 209, 300, 506). Qayruwān (south of Tunis), which was built in 50/670, figures here only in view of its notoriety, as a stronghold of Islam in the Far West, in the time of Gurgānī. Berberia is the westernmost point recorded in Muslim geographers.[2]

2. Somewhat apart in the story stands a series of unusual terms and names pointing to the territory of the original Parthia (Western Khorāsān). Such are (*a*) the Burzīn fire, (*b*) the daughter of the *kanārang*, (*c*) the native place of the nurse (Khūzān), (*d*) the hero called *Kishmēr-yal, and (*e*) the land of *Humāvan. These somewhat obliterated terms need a careful examination.

(*a*) The famous temple of Burzīn-Mihr is possibly identical with the national fire of the Arsacids which Isidore of Charax mentions in connection with the province Astauēnē. The temple lay at Rēvand, to the west of Nīshāpūr [3] (the latter being a Sasanian foundation). Vīs was buried close to the Burzīn fire and Rāmīn retired there in his old age (p. 508).

(*b*) Both the Indian and the new editions mention among Mōbad's guests (p. 31) a daughter of the *kanārang*. The indication of this dignitary's fief is faulty in the two editions. ساوه (Minovi) is impossible, for no kanārangs have ever been known in Sāva, which regularly comes under the Rayy region (p. 155). Kanārang is a Khorasanian title. At the time of the Arab conquest a *kanārang* (*kanarē*) was ruling over Nīshāpūr, Ṭūs, Nisā, and Abīvard, i.e. over the nucleus of Parthian territories, cf. Balādhurī, 405. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, 75, thought that the title belonged to the hereditary rulers of pre-Sasanian times. Both the noblemen on whose initiative the prose version of the *Shāh-nāma* was compiled in A.D. 957, namely Abū Manṣūr b. 'Abd al-Razzāq of Ṭūs and his deputy Abū Manṣūr al-Ma'marī, claimed to be descendants of the kanārang.[4] The Indian edition (p. 31) reads the name of the kanārang's fief رسنون which has no meaning. I should restore it as *استون Astū(n) and identify it with استوا as the early Muslim geographers call the region of Qūchān (the ancient Ἀσταυηνή).[5]

(*c*) In connection with *Astauēnē*, one should consider the difficult question of Khūzān, the native place of Vīs's wily nurse, which is also called *shahr-i Khūzān* " town (or country ?) of Khūzān " (p. 163). Both Mōbad (p. 163) and Vīs (p. 138) are equally loud in their curses of this home of impudence, sorcery, and evil. It is a puzzle how the scions of two noble houses could have been entrusted to a Khūzānī and sent to Khūzān. Khūzān cannot be identified with Khūzistān, if only for the simple reason that the latter was

[1] Georgian translation : " India, the lands of Turks, Greece, China, Arran, and Iraq."

[2] See the old Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*, ed. Qazvīnī, p. 36.

[3] See Hoffmann, *Persische Märtyrer*, pp. 290–1, and *Ḥudūd al-'ālam*, 326. Rēvand may be a *later* home of the fire.

[4] See the old Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*, pp. 52, 57.

[5] Nuzhat al-qulūb, 150, speaking of Khabūshān (= Qūchān) says : " in the government books the name of this district is written استو *Astū." Juvayni, ii, 13 : *Khabūshān-i Ustuvā* (or *Ustū*). Probably " a hearth, a home " = Turk. *ojaq*.

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known for its particularly unhealthy climate.[1] It is futile to postulate a royal baby being sent from Marv to the other end of Iran. Khūzān should be looked for somewhere halfway between Marv and Hamadān for Rāmīn and Vīs to have met at the same nurse's. One detail confirms this view. The distance from Marv to Gūrāb (or, for that matter, to Hamadān) was covered both by the nurse and Ādhēn in two weeks' time (pp. 332, 386). Rāmīn and Vīs, fleeing from Marv, reached Rayy in ten days (p. 198). On the other hand, it took the nurse only a week to join Vīs in Marv, travelling on swift camels (*jamāza*) and starting, as it seems, from her home (p. 93). A *Khūzān* exists in the district of Mārbīn of Isfahān.[2] It is also possible to imagine Khūzān (*Khūzhān) as a parallel form of *Khūjān* (*Ḥudūd al-'ālam*, fol. 19*b*), i.e. the present day Qūchān[3] on the upper course of the Atrak (in Astauēnē, *vide infra*, p. 27). The fact that the villages Khūzān were known in Herat and Panjdih[4] and that a district Khujistān (although with a short *u*) existed on the upper Heri-rūd suggests that there may have been in ancient Khorasan some tribe *Khūz/Khuz* whose name has survived in local toponymy.[5] One might notice that Vīs reproaches Rāmīn (p. 430) for having treated the nurse as " an ignorant *gharcha* ". This word is of distinctly Eastern Iranian origin (" a mountaineer "), and even now a considerable tract of the highlands separating the Murghāb from the Heri-rūd is called Gharchistān.[6] In the tenth century A.D. it possessed its own rulers with the title *shar*. However, the term *gharcha* in common Persian speech means only " rustic, boorish ".

The choice between the possible identifications of Khūzān is embarrassing, but both the village of Isfahān and especially the highlands of Murghāb lie off the axis Marv/Hamadān, along which one would expect to find the roof under which both Rāmīn and Vīs met in their childhood. Therefore, and especially in view of the distances, it is safer to seek Khūzān (*Khūzhān) at Qūchān (< Khūjān). Even admitting that Astauēnē was a home-land of the Arsacids, one could imagine that Khūzān was an enclave or colony of some particular (and more ancient) tribe at which the Parthians looked askance.

(*d*) The name of the hero *K.šmyr-yal* or *K.šmyr* is very strange. Although the Indian Kashmīr is mentioned in the *Bundahishn*[7] and several times in the *Shāh-nāma*, it is no part of Iranian lands and would be entirely unexpected in our " Khorasanian " context. Therefore I should rather connect Gurgānī's *K.šmyr* with the village of Kishmar, famous for a cypress which Zoroaster

[1] Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād*, 102: " the people (of Ahwāz, which is Khūzistān) are the most miserable of all men. You do not see there a ruddy cheek. Its air is fatal (*qattāla*) to men, especially to strangers."

[2] Yāqūt, ii, 494; *Nuzhat*, 50. One of the Khūzān worthies (d. 533/1138) lived in Marv. Another celebrity was Amīr Yār Aḥmad Khūzānī Isfahānī, surnamed Najm-i Thānī, who took an active part in Shah Ismā'īl's operations in the region of Marv (in 916/1510), and was known for his ruthlessness.

[3] Cf. above, p. 758, note 5.

[4] According to Yāqūt, the latter abounded in amenities (*kathīrat al-khayr*).

[5] Yāqūt avers that a colony of Khūz (of Khūzistān) occupied a special quarter in Isfahān. The same may be true of the Khūzān of Mārbīn. But whether a similar migration can explain the names in Eastern Khorāsān is more doubtful. In our case no great weight can be put on the well-known similarity of the *prehistoric* pottery of Anau (in the present day Turkmenistan) to that of Susa in Khūzistān.

[6] See Longworth Dames, *Gharčistān*, in *E.I.*

[7] Gr. Bundahishn, 197, 2: *kšmyr i andarōn*, and 199, 1: " Kashmīr in the mountains of India " (H. W. Bailey); cf. *Ḥudūd al-'ālam*, 254.

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had brought from paradise (*Shāh-nāma*, vi, 1499). It lies at one day's journey to the east of Turshīz (Sultanabad), in Southern Khorāsān.[1] According to lexicographers the name appears also as Kishmār and Kishmīr (**Kishmēr*). In fact such an early author as 'Abd al-Malik Tha'ālibī (d. 430/1037) spells the name *K.shmyr* (**Kishmēr*), and so does the *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 122, 143. Among the kings on whom the Sasanian Ardashīr conferred titles, I. Khurdādhbih, p. 17, mentions a Q.shmīrān-shāh. As the kings named are mostly those on the immediate periphery of Iran, it is possible that the Q.shmīrān (**Kishmērān*)-shāh was connected with the district of Turshīz. This would explain Gurgānī's reference to *Kishmēr-yal*, and add one more detail to the Khorasanian frame of the story.

(*e*) The land of *Humāvan mentioned in the Indian edition (and in the Georgian translation, p. 6) as the home of one of the ladies at Mōbad's festival is very curious, as it belongs to the geography of the contested Irano-Turanian borderland.

H.māvan (**Humāvan*) is a mountain particularly associated with the second Irano-Turanian war under Kay Khusrau (*Shāh-nāma*, iv, 895–940), which, it is not unlikely, reflects some real struggles between the Arsacids and the invaders from Central Asia. The Iranians commanded by Ṭōs and Gōdarz marched against the Turanian army led by Kāmūs-i Kushānī. The campaign begins on the river which Firdausī calls *Shahd*. Marquart, *Wehrōt*, pp. 6–7, has shown that this name should be restored as **Sind* (Tac. ann. 11, 10: *Sindes*; Yāqūt, iii, 167). The river apparently corresponds to the lower course of the Heri-rūd, which in ancient times was lost in wooded marshes between Sarakhs and Abīvard. After the Iranians lost the first battles they took up a position on Mount Humāvan, where they were besieged by the Turanians. This height can only correspond to one of the eastern peaks of the Northern Khorasanian range (Kopet-dāgh). In the course of the first two campaigns under K. Khusrau the Irano-Turanian boundary is definitely placed on the Heri-rūd, and I am disposed to identify Humāvan with Mount *X^{v}anvand*, which (Yasht, 8, 38) was struck by the arrow of the Aryan archer Erexša (Ārish). The object of his shot was to mark the farthest frontier point of Iran, and, in view of the position of the river "Shahd" and Mount Humāvan, the *original* version of Erexša's exploit can be located there. The identity of the names *X^{v}anvand* and **Humāvan* is very probable, in spite of some phonetic difficulties, as is common in geographical names.[2]

As the frontier of Iran moved forward in the direction of the Oxus, the geographical interpretation of the legend naturally tended to follow the existing conditions, or even claims.

To conclude the commentary on Humāvan one should put on record the

[1] It is possible that originally Kishmar was the name of the cypress *itself*. According to the *Shāh-nāma*, vi, 1499, the Kishmar cypress was planted by Gushtāsp at the gate of the Burzīn-mihr fire (the latter being situated at Rēvand, *vide infra*, p. 32). Tha'ālibi, *Thimār al-qulūb*, Cambridge Or. 828, fol. 158*b*, says that King Bīstasf planted it at *Kishmēr in the rustaq of B.st (*Pusht) of Nīshāpūr. According to the *Ta'rīkh-i Bayhaq*, Tehran, 1938, p. 281, two cypresses were planted, one at Ṭuraythīth (Turshīz) and another at Faryūmad. The *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 122, 143, speaks of the two ancient cypresses, one in Balkh and the other in Kishmar (var. **Kishmēr*), the latter planted by Gushtāsp's minister Jamāsp. That Kishmar was once a place of some importance is shown by the large tower standing in it and apparently belonging to the thirteenth century, Diez, *Churasanische Baudenkmäler*, 1918, p. 46, but nothing is known on its earlier history.

[2] Rather unexpectedly Herzfeld locates X^{v}anvant in the West (!) between Hamadān and Zagros, *Mitt. aus Iran*, ii/2, pp. 83–4.

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curious reference of Gurgānī to the shot of Ārish (p. 366 and the allusions on pp. 255, 322, 398).[1] According to him,[2] the arrow flew from Sārī to Marv. Should this detail belong to the original Pahlavi source, the target is taken on to the following river, the Murghāb, but is still short of the rivers of Gōzgānān, and especially of the Oxus, where the legend was located under the Sasanians. See *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam*, pp. 330–2.

Although the five Khorasanian terms just analysed have something vague about them, their appearance in Gurgānī's text is significant. They seem to belong to the dust of local traditions, semi-forgotten, but still taken for granted. They may represent the oldest layer of recollections forming the background of the romance of Vīs and Rāmīn. The hints at the Kay Khusrau lore are also interesting from the point of view of the imaginary connection of this king with the Parthian heroes (*vide infra*).

3. The second pivot of the poem is the capital of Māh, Hamadān, in Western Iran. Already Rayy (Rhages) belongs to the orbit of Māh (pp. 57 and 199). The extent of the connections of Hamadān appears from the list of friends on whom Vīrō relies in the hour of danger from the East. His auxiliaries (vassals ?) come from Ādharbāyagān, Rayy, Gīlān, Khūzistān, Iṣṭakhr, Isfahān, and partly from Daylam (pp. 57–8). The mention of Iṣṭakhr is curious as a hint at the relations of the Māh family with Fārs. West of Hamadān, Nihāvand and Dēnavar are repeatedly referred to in connection with the affairs of Māh.

Gūrāb (Georgian transl. *Gorab*), which holds a prominent place in the story, is a small fief entirely submissive to Māh. Its chiefs are described not as princes but as notables (*sarafrāzān*), and, of them, Rafēdā has close relations with Hamadān (pp. 168, 321). The range of friendships of the Gūrāb family appears from the list of guests whom Gul, the Lady of Gūrāb, invited to her wedding. They came from Gurgān, Rayy, Qom, Isfahān, Khūzistān, Kuhistān (here Media !) and Hamadān (p. 324). Gul's brother was the governor (*pahlavān*) of Ādharbāyagān.

The position of Gūrāb is clearly to the south of Hamadān. When Mōbad led an army against Māh, Vīrō concentrated his men in the plain of Nihāvand (p. 58), but then must have moved them northwards to Dēnavar (lying on the highway from Mesopotamia to Khorāsān) where the king's army was defeated (p. 65, and again p. 190). In his flight Mōbad left (to the north) the road to Khorāsān and retreated (south-east) to Isfahān (over Nihāvand ?). As Vīrō's attention was distracted by the Daylamites, Mōbad retraced his steps to Gūrāb, where Vīs was staying.[3]

The descriptions leave no doubt that Gūrāb is identical with *Jurāb*, which Arab geographers place at the crossing of the roads from Nihāvand and Hamadān to Karaj (at 14 farsakhs east of the former, and at 12 farsakhs south

[1] The Avestan archer *ərəxša* seems to have been confused with the Kayānid Kavi Arshan (Ṭab. *Ash al-Jabbār*), under the common Modern Persian form Ārish/Arish, cf. Marquart, *ZDMG.*, 1895, p. 634.

[2] Only the historian of Ṭabaristān Ẓahīr al-Dīn, who wrote A.D. 1476, has a similar statement.

[3] That Mōbad carried Vīs from Gūrāb does not mean that this was Vīs's home, but rather that she temporarily sojourned in the castle (*diz*) while the situation was unsettled.

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of the latter, cf. Qudāma, 199). Even now the village Jūrāb (< Gūrāb) occupies that position (to the south of Daulat-ābād-Malāyīr).[1]

The origin of the name Gūrāb (as indicated by the Georgian transcription) is not clear. For گوراب and گورابه dictionaries give the meanings "salt marsh, a dome over a tomb, cemetery, hippodrome, a stocking (**jōrāb*), etc." Possibly two different words (*gūr-* and *gōr-*) have been run into one in the same paragraph.[2] In the *Shāh-nāma*, i, 228, *gurāba* seems to stand for "borough, suburb" (?) (in Sīstān), and i, 267, Zāl is said to have built for his father "a *dakhma* within the *gūrāba*". As a place-name *Gūrāb* is very frequent in Gīlān.[3] Originally the names may have referred to sacred tombs, but at present these *gūrābs* are only hamlets with market-places. In Central Persia the Jur-āb/Gūrāb/Jūrāb, to the south of Hamadan, stands isolated, but, in view of the general meaning attested in the *Shāh-nāma*, it is difficult to draw any special conclusions from the similarity of its name with the *gūrābs* of Gīlān.

The special position of Daylam (i.e. the highlands of Gīlān) is very clear in *Vīs u Rāmīn*. When Mōbad attacks Vīrō some Daylamites come to the latter's help, but immediately after (p. 66) the shah of Daylam stabs Vīrō in the back by sending his troops to Tārom (on the middle Sefīd-rūd, see *E.I.*), where Vīrō has a representative. Daylam does not figure in the list of Rāmīn's conquests on behalf of Mōbad (p. 316), but when he seeks a refuge for himself and the treasure seized at Marv he penetrates into Daylam *via* Qazvīn (p. 494), famous in Muslim annals as the bulwark against the Daylamites. This time the wild mountaineers are impressed by his personality and largesse and help him. The description of the Daylamites is very vivid, and may be based on Gurgānī's own observations.[4] In the tenth century A.D. these highlanders played in Iran a rôle similar to that of the Norsemen in Europe. Gurgānī wrote at a time when the Būyid rulers were living their last days in Baghdād and Fārs. Possibly to please his Seljuk patrons, Gurgānī refers to the world being still in ruins from "the Daylamite violence".[5] On the other hand he states that since Adam's time no king had ever conquered Daylam, and "down to our time this country has remained virgin (*būm-i dūshiza*, p. 495)". It is known, however, that a Sasanian prince Kayūs b. Qobād had established himself in this region for some time. In the legend of Bahrām Chōbēn the remnants of his troops led by his sister Gurdiya find asylum in Daylam, cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte d. Perser*, p. 479. This episode may have influenced the report of Rāmīn's adventures in Daylam.

[1] I passed it in 1905, on my way from Hamadān to Burūjird. [According to the *Gazetteer of Persia*, 1905, ii, 270, there are some ruins at Jurab and an old fort. My former pupil, R. Savory, writes to me (Hamadan, 25, I. 1946) that the ruined fort stands in a very prominent position on an (artificial ?) eminence, on the northern side of the village.]

[2] Dr. W. Henning admits the possibility of an Aramaic etymology for *gūrāb* "a sepulchre".

[3] In the region of Rasht one finds Gūrāb-sar, Gūrāb-jīr, Lūcha-gūrāb, Aḥmad-gūrāb, another Gūrāb-sar, Gūrāb-pas, Gūrāb-Naṣīr, Kuhna-gūrāb, Khatma-gūrāb, see Melgunov, *O yuzhnom berege*, 1869, pp. 226, 228, 232, 237, 239.

[4] Very similar to the statements in the *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam*, p. 306, and Muqaddasī, 368. See Minorsky, *La domination des Daïlamites*, Paris, 1932.

[5] To Gurgānī's honour, he does not gloss over the Seljuk destruction of the countryside of Isfahān, pp. 18, 23.

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The overlords of Marv are paramount not only in Māh but far beyond it. From Hamadān, Mōbad plans an excursion to Mūqān, on the lower Kur, within the limits of Arrān, whereas Rāmīn is about to visit Armenia (pp. 162–3). Later Mōbad leads an army against the Emperor of Rūm (p. 229), but seems to operate chiefly in Arrān and Armenia (p. 253). Rāmīn, in his quality of sipāhbad of Māh, descends down to Khūzistān and Baghdād (p. 316) and destroys the king's enemies between Mosul, Syria, and Armenia (var. *Arrān*) (p. 470). Finally he succeeds Mōbad in the empire extending " from China to Berberia " (p. 504). Of his sons, one receives the East, with Soghd, Khwārazm, and Chaghān (north of the middle Oxus), and the other the West (*bākhtar*) with Syria, Egypt, and Qayruwān. Vīs's personal fief comprises Ādharbāyagān, Arrān, and Armenia.

4. There may be some obscurities in the toponymy of *Vīs u Rāmīn*, but, on the whole, its geographical frame is solid [1] and does not belong to the category of poetical ballast carried to steady the metre. The basic names are definitely part and parcel of the original version of the story. Nor does the poet Gurgānī handle them mechanically. Throughout his poem are strewn numerous geographical epithets astonishing for the correct use made of them. Suffice to notice :—

Abkhazian archers (*tīr-afkan-i Abkhāz*, p. 317), beauties of Khallukh (i.e. Turkish Qarluq, p. 79) ; beauties compared to pictures of Qandahār (i.e. frescoes of Gandhāra ?) (407) (cf. *Shāh-nāma*, iv, 1076 : *lu'bat-i Qandahār*). Chinese " icons " (*qibla-yi Chīn*) (328) and Chinese " culs-de-lampe " (*shamsa*) (407).

Bulls of Gīlān (294), deer (*gavazn*) of Rūdbār (32), elephants of Tokharistān (*fīl-i Tukhāra* ?), scorpions (*jarrāra*) of Ahwāz.

Alanian padlocks (*qufl-i Alānī*) (274), referring probably to the work of the locksmiths of Zirih-garān in Dāghestān ; Greek keys (274) (cf. *Shāh-nāma*, iv, 1089 : *band-i Rūmī* " fetters of Rūm ") ; Indian steel and blades (*pūlād* and *firand*) (274, 294) ; textiles of Rūm and China (310), brocades of Shūshtar (325), silk (*harīr*) of Astarābād (40).

Aloes of Khmer (*'ūd-i Qimarī*) (32) and Samundūr (Samudra) (346), musk of Khirkhīz (Qirghiz) and Tibet (406, 409), camphor of Panchūr (*Fanṣūr*) (404) ; pomegranates of Berberia (318), etc.

Only in one point has Gurgānī been carried away by his imagination. According to him (p. 505), one of Rāmīn's foundations was Ahwāz, which still figured in the registers as *Rām-shahr*. In fact, the old name of Ahwāz was Hormuz-Ardashīr (> *Hurmūshīr*), and it is said to have been built by the Sasanian Ardashīr, Ṭabarī-Nöldeke, p. 19. More likely Rām-shahr is meant to stand for the town Rām-Hormuz (> *Rāmiz*) lying 60 miles east of Ahwāz, but this town, too, is ascribed either to Ardashīr or to his grandson Hormizd b. Shāpūr, see Ṭabarī-Nöldeke, 46 ; Ḥamza, 46 ; Marquart, *Provincial Capitals*, § 46 and p. 96.

[1] This fact was already noticed by Nöldeke, *Pers. Stud.*, ii, 27 : " fast ganz klar sind dagegen die geographischen Verhältnisse in Wīs und Rāmīn."

(*To be continued*)

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Vīs u Rāmīn: A Parthian Romance (Conclusion)
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Vīs u Rāmīn

A Parthian Romance

By V. Minorsky

(*Conclusion*)

§ 5. Political Organization

SOME scheme of political organization can also be detected in the text of *Vīs u Rāmīn*.

The capital Marv is definitely considered the centre of a world monarchy, within the limits which we have tried to elucidate.[1] Mōbad is the king of kings, *shahriyār*, to whom all the shahs owe obedience (*banda būdand*) (p. 28). His personal dominions lie in North-Eastern Iran and are surrounded by a belt of vassal territories (Ṭabaristān, Gurgān, Dihistān, Khwārazm, etc.), but politically his authority extends to Media and beyond it to Transcaucasia (Arrān) and Armenia, reaching even the Mediterranean and North African territories.

It is true that Media formed a special self-governing body, but Mōbad led his armies against it, or marched through it, whenever he liked. The wars between Marv and Māh were those of a suzerain against a vassal. Zard reports to Mōbad as an indication of Vīrō's rebellious spirit that he assumed the title which apparently was tantamount to local sovereignty. Very curiously the youthful Rāmīn is described (p. 109) as "brother and child[2] to Mōbad, but shah and lord (*khudāvand*) to Māh". This suggests that Media may have been earmarked as a particular appanage of a younger member of the Marv dynasty, similarly to what Ādharbāyjān was to the Qājār heirs to the throne. Rāmīn's mother (p. 212) calls him *sipāhbad* endowed with a margravate (*marzubānī*) in Khorāsān, but when Rāmīn expresses his desire to go to Māhābād he asks Mōbad for an appointment as sipāhbad in that region (*kishvar*), and this is granted.[3]

One must not be led astray by Shahrō's words to Vīs (p. 42): "thy father is a *khusrau*," and the epithets which the nurse applies to Vīrō (p. 94): *shāh* and *shāh-zāda*. These seem to be titles of politeness possibly reflecting Vīrō's distinction on the distaff side. His father Qārin (p. 56) is called *gurd* ("hero"), which is a usual appellation of knights and paladins surrounding a throne. Thus it appears that Qārin and Vīrō were vassals receiving assignments from

[1] This is the weak point in the Muslim authors who tried to fit Mōbad into the reign of *other* great kings. *Vide* instalment A, *Bull. S.O.A.S.*, XI/4, 741.

[2] It has been suggested to me by a keen reader that this may be another hint at the Zoroastrian practice of *xvētōkdas* (marriage within the family), but I doubt whether we can go so far on the strength of an epithet which finds an easy figurative explanation.

[3] Some time before this happens we see Shahrō (and possibly Vīrō) in Marv (pp. 265, 271), which may be a foreboding of the coming change of administration.

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Marv, perhaps pending Rāmīn's majority. The appointment of " Shahrō's husband " (*shūy-i Shahrō*, p. 52) to Hamadān may have been due to the nobility of this lady, issued from Jamshēd. [But cf. p. 33].

If Vīrō was not originally connected with Hamadān, the title which he assumed to the displeasure of Marv is very likely to be that of the ancient rulers of the place. *Rūḥā* (روحا) is definitely impossible, and the original form might be restored as *روجا *Rūjā* with the meaning approaching " Serenissimus " (cf. *ruxš* " splendour ", *rōšan* " clarus ").[1] Unfortunately the ancient title of the rulers of Media has not been recorded in the sources [2] and we have only a vague idea of the older dialects of that country.

Even though the rulers of Māh were dependent on Marv, it did not impair their authority over their own vassals (" vavasours "). Such seem to have been the notables of Gūrāb. Ādharbāyagān is a province from which Vīrō called in his allies (p. 57), and we also know that the governor of Ādharbāyjān was brother to Gul, Lady of Gūrāb (p. 320).

The administrative terms figuring in the poem are :—

dastūr, an equivalent of Islamic vazīr ; the office was held by Mōbad's half-brother Zard ;

sipāhbad " generalissimo " ; this title is applied to Zard, to Rāmīn (first in Khorāsān and later in Māh) and to Vīrō (after Rāmīn's accession to the throne) ; of the lower ranks in the army are mentioned (pp. 195, 504) *sarvarān* and *gahbadān*, possibly " officers and pay-masters " (cf. Arab. *jahbadh* " a banker ").

marzubān " warden of the march " : Rāmīn (in Khorāsān and in Māh, p. 316) ; Gul's brother in Ādharbāyagān (p. 320) ;

pahlavān : Rāmīn (at Mōbad's court, p. 316) ; Gul's brother (in Ādharbāyagān) ; no great stress can be put on this general term (in Firdausī : " a hero "), although it is quite probable that originally it was connected with the noble Parthian families, such as Kārēn, Sūrēn, and Aspāhbadh, *vide infra*, p. 29, and cf. Christensen. *L'empire des Sasanides*, p. 23 ;

sarhang-i sarāy " mayor of the palace ", Georgian transl. *msaxurt uxutsesi* : Shērō, another brother of Vīs ;

kanārang (Byzantine χαναράγγης) : father of one of the " beauties " at Mōbad's court. As stated above, A, 758, the title belonged to the warden of the Khorasanian march (Ṭūs, etc.). Firdausī quotes separately the *kanārangs* of Marv and of Ṭūs. [On *kōtvāl*, *vide supra*, p. 12, note 1].

On the whole, the story depicts a great oriental monarchy, not entirely centralized. The nucleus of the state (Marv) borders on a number of vassal territories whose autonomy increases in proportion with their distance from the centre, and whose lords with their ladies go to pay homage to the king. Among these lords there are representatives of the ancient dynasties (Shahrō, Ruhhām) who receive assignments of provinces and in this way are incorporated

[1] Dr. Henning suggests an alternative reading : **wrjā* " powerful ".

[2] At the time of the Arab conquest the commander in Hamadān was *Khusrau-sh.nūm*, but this seems to be an honorary title conferred by the king, cf. Justi, pp. 139, 314 ; Marquart *Ērānšahr*, 71, 73.

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into the general pattern of administration. Things were not going smoothly in Mōbad's kingdom. His personality may have been responsible for the discontent in the army to which he himself refers (p. 496). One of the stakes of the cunning nurse, in her plan of revolt against Mōbad, is also the disaffection reigning among Mōbad's vassals, whom she calls *shāhān* (p. 481).

Of the religious hierarchy (*mōbad, dīndār*) there is hardly any mention in the text (p. 195). A romantic poem naturally leaves very little space to religious matters,[1] but one passage (p. 44) is very characteristic. Shahrō herself marries her children Vīrō and Vīs by joining their hands, while she declares: "there is no need of a mōbad's seal on the contract (*nāma*), nor of the presence of witnesses," for God alone is a sufficient witness. This attitude surely points to a period before the formation of a powerful class of priesthood, i.e. to the pre-Sasanian period.[2]

§ 6. Conclusions

1. Geographical background of the poem is Arsacid
2. The home of the Parthians and Marv
3. The branch of Gōdarz-Bēzhan
4. Marv under the Sasanians
5. "Mōbad Manīkān"
6. Kārēn of Media and his wife Shahrō
7. Final summing up

1. Had Gurgānī written his *Vīs u Rāmīn* a score of years later, after Alp Arslan defeated the Byzantine emperor in the plain of Malāzgird (26th September, 1071), one might have imagined that the story was arranged to suit the Seljuk fortunes. However, both the ancient details of the plot and the unequivocal date of composition leave no doubt as to where the background of the story should be looked for.[3] In fact, at no period of the long history of Iran did the material, and especially geographical conditions, correspond to those described in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, except at the time of Parthian dominion, under the rule of the Arsacid dynasty.

These kings were issued from the Parni clan of the Daha nomads who lived in the steppes to the south-east of the Caspian, where their name has survived in that of the district of Dihistān.[4] The Arsacids first rose to fame on

[1] See the occasional mentions of the God of the Universe (*yazdān-i jahān*, p. 210) and Ahriman (pp. 193, 330), of the fire-temple (Burzīn) with a *dakhma* (p. 508), and of oaths taken either to the "pure souls of the good and the ancestors" (i.e. *fravartis*, p. 210), or before the temple fire specially fed with wood (p. 195). Maleficent *dēvs* are frequently mentioned in the text (p. 103, etc.), often with the adjective *sitanba* "evil, ugly, strong": p. 150 *sitanba-dēv-i mihr*; p. 407: *sitanba-dēv-i hijrān*; p. 412: *sitanba-dēv-i bad-khū* (possibly an incubus).

[2] Gutschmid, *Gesch. Irans*, 58: "freilich eine so allmächtige Stellung wie unter den Sasaniden nahmen die Magier in der Arsacidenzeit noch nicht ein."

[3] These details form the genuine background of the story, and it is unlikely that Gurgānī was guided only by recollections of the western campaigns under the Sāmānids (Abū 'Alī Chaghānī's campaign in A.D. 944) and Ghaznavids (Mas'ūd's capture of Hamadān in A.D. 1029).

[4] A district on the lower Atrak, mentioned as King Mōbad's dependency, pp. 31 and 57. Also *vide infra*, p. 29, Ṭabarī's reference to Dihistān. The original territory of the Daha extended much further east beyond the Tejen (Ochos).

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the northern fringe of Khorāsān. Thence they expanded along the historical highway connecting Khorāsān with Media and further with Mesopotamia. In Southern Persia some obscure descendants of the Achæmenids (?) carried on as kinglets on a purely local level (*fratakara*). In the first century A.D. a Parthian family (Mihrān) ousted the Sakas from Sīstān and later penetrated into India (under the name of Palhava). In Armenia a Parthian dynasty ruled A.D. 51–430, and maintained its position in Sasanian times, but even before A.D. 51 Parthian princes occasionally occupied the Armenian throne.[1] In the west the Parthians perpetually clashed with the Seleucids and Romans, and in 40 B.C. occupied Jerusalem. The famous silk road connecting China with the Mediterranean ran within the Parthian dominions. Central Persia was in feudal occupation of the great Parthian families, such as Kārēn (Arab. *Qārin*), Mihrān, and Sūrēn. In Arabic the term *mulūk al-ṭawā'if* ("tribal kings, ethnarchs") is used to describe the feudal character of Parthian dominion.

All these general characteristics are reflected in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, and even the details about Mōbad's "domination" in China and India, his intended trip to Zāvul (more or less corresponding to Sīstān), the expedition to Arrān [2] and Armenia, the war with the "Roman cæsar", the extension of Mōbad's sway to Mosul and Syria have not the appearance of pure figments of Gurgānī's imagination,[3] but of likely echoes of Arsacid times.

2. At this place it will be helpful to quote the description of the original Parthian territory found in Isidore of Charax (who wrote in the earliest years of our era): "behind Comisēnē (Arab. *Kōmish*) and Hyrcania (Arab. *Gurgān*) is Astauēnē, 60 schoeni (= 60 farsakhs) . . . and the city of Asaak (*Ἀρσακ ?) in which Arsaces was first proclaimed king; and an everlasting fire is guarded there. Beyond is Parthyēnē (Parthia), 25 schoeni, within which is a valley, and the city of Parthau-Nisa (Arab. *Nisā*) after 6 schoeni; there are royal tombs. . . . Then the city of Gathar after 6 schoeni. Then the city of Sirōc (= Sarakhs ?) after 5 schoeni. . . . Beyond is Apauarktikēnē (= Abīvard) 27 schoeni. Then the city of Ragau. . . . Beyond is Margiana (= Marv), 30 schoeni. There is Antiochia, called "well-watered"; but there are no villages. . . ."

Should our restoration of the names *Astūn (= Astauēnē), Khūzān, and *Humāvan prove acceptable,[4] their combination with the fire Mihr-Burzīn, Kishmēr, Dihistān, etc., is clearly suggestive of Parthian memories. Most characteristic of all is the total eclipse, throughout the story, of Fārs, that cradle of the Achæmenids and the Sasanians. Such oblivion would be unthinkable under the successors of the Arsacids.

Neither the "Turanians" nor the "Turks" are spoken of in the poem, except for a lady at Mōbad's court, who is the daughter of the *khāqān*, but

[1] Khalatyantz, *Ocherk istorii Armenii*, Moscow, 1910, chapters xii–xiii.

[2] Even in the seventh century A.D. there was a Christian dynasty in Arrān descended from Mihrān, said to be of Sasanian origin, although originally "Mihrān" was a Parthian family (of Rayy).

[3] To the latter category belongs only the Muslim Qayruwān projected into the hoary past.

[4] *Vide supra*, A, 758.

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bears an Iranian name. The term *khāqān* is too vague for any historical identification, especially as it could have been used retrospectively.[1]

The choice of Marv as a capital of Mōbad is somewhat unexpected, as this ancient city does not loom very high in our scanty data on the home of the Arsacids. However, Marv is included in the line of σταθμοὶ Παρθικοί, but immediately after Margiana the road described by Isidore of Charax sharply turns away southwards to Aria (Herat). In fact without solid occupation of Marv [2] the basin of the Tejen (i.e. the lower Hari-rūd, Ochos), the royal tombs, the historic Asaak, and the fire-temple would have enjoyed no security from the turbulent tribes of the steppes. According to Pliny (*vide infra*, p. 26) Roman captives, survivors of Crassus' defeat (on 9th June, 53 B.C.), were settled by King Orodes in Margiana. If our historical commentary on the dynasty of Mōbad is right, the position of Marv as the pivot of the story is quite plausible.

3. To define more closely the period to which *Vīs u Rāmīn* belongs is a more difficult task. The Parthians lorded it over Iran for nearly five centuries (from 247 B.C. to A.D. 224), but their successors, the Sasanians, obliterated their memory more thoroughly than the 'Abbāsids did that of the Omayyads. The very character of a romantic poem is unlike the hero-worshipping attitude of the *Shāh-nāma*; and, in the course of transmission and adaptation, the story must have lost many characteristic features (see Gurgānī's *Preface*). With all that, it seems to be connected with the branch of the Parthian rulers founded by Gōdarz II (A.D. 39–51 ?). His stormy career is mainly known through Roman authors (Tacitus). Gōdarz, son of Gēv (ΓΩΤΑΡΖΗΣ ΓΕΟΠΟΘΡΟΣ, as he calls himself in his inscription at Bīsutūn) is usually taken for a "Hyrcanian".[3] He was adopted by his father-in-law Artabanus II (A.D. 12–38 ?), himself an Arsacid only on the maternal side.[4] Both Artabanus and his adopted son were champions of the Arsacid homelands as against the westernized kings brought up in Media, Mesopotamia, or even Rome. The signal episode in the career of Gōtarzes is the defeat he inflicted on the Roman candidate Meherdates (*vide infra*, p. 30). Gōtarzes died in A.D. 51, and after him Hyrcania (Gurgān) became an independent kingdom, which existed for another century and even sent embassies to Rome. Hardly anything is known of the history of this body politic except that it incorporated Caramania (Kirman) [5] in the south and thus formed a continuous eastern wall. Marv, lying in the extreme east of the Parthian territories, must have been comprised in the orbit of Hyrcania.

[1] Of Turkish terms I have noticed in the text only *chākar*.

[2] Marv 68 schoeni (in reality *circa* 220 miles) from Nisā.

[3] What it means ethnologically is not easy to say. A special language (*lwtrā* ?) is mentioned in Gurgān in the *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam* (tr., p. 134), and in the fifteenth century the Ḥurūfī heresiarch Faḍlullāh wrote in the local dialect. Our further development would suggest some special links of Gōdarz with the region of Nisā-Marv.

[4] Marquart, *ZDMG.*, 1895, 641 ; N. C. Debevoise, *A political history of Parthia*, 1938, 152–166, considers him as Artabanus III.

[5] In spite of Herzfeld's doubt, *Arch. Mitt.*, iv/2, 87, *Caramania* tallies with the Acts of the Apostle Thomas.

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Very confused recollections of Arsacid times have survived in Iran, but even these vague genealogies and legends, which may have preserved some facts of local importance,[1] are precious for our special task of assigning to *Vīs u Rāmīn* a place in Iranian tradition.

One of the more complete lists of the Arsacids is found in Ṭabarī, i, 710 [2] :—

1. Afqūr (Pacorus) b. Balāsh b. Sābūr b. Ashkān b. Ash al-Jabbār (= Kavi Arshan) b. Siyāvush b. Kay Khusrau.
2. Sābūr b. Afqūr (contemporary of Jesus Christ).
3. Jūdharz b. Sābūr.
4. Abzān (= Bēzhan) b. Balāsh b. Sābūr.
5. Jūdharz b. Abzān.
6. Narsē b. Abzān.
7. al-Hurmuzān b. Balāsh.
8. al-Fayrūzān b. al-Hurmuzān.
9. Kisrā b. al-Fayrūzān.
10. Arduvān (= Artabanus V) b. Balāsh.

In the *Shāh-nāma* the history of the *Ashkāniyān* (Arsacids) has been reduced to seven names [3] and told in twenty verses: "of them," says Firdausī, "I have not heard, save for the names, nor have I seen them in the *Book of Rulers*."

It was Nöldeke who made an ingenious suggestion with regard to the Arsacids. He thought that the occurrence of the group of names, consisting of Gōdarz, Gēv (Vēv), and Bēzhan,[4] both in the genealogies of the Arsacids and in the saga of Kay Khusrau, as told in the *Book of Kings*, could not be fortuitous. His idea was that, probably at the instigation of the noble Parthian families who took service under the Sasanians, the deeds of their noble ancestors had been projected back into the times of the mythical Kayānian king Kay Khusrau, who himself was endowed with some traits of Artabanus II.[5] One of the paladins of Kay Khusrau, Gōdarz (considered as father of Gēv), who is

[1] Nöldeke, *Pers. Studien*, ii, 31, thought that Muslim genealogies of the Arsacids referred to a side-line (Nebenlinie) having outlived the fall of the Parthian empire.

[2] Cf. Ḥamza, pp. 14, 28, 36, 41–4; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, ii, 136; Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, pp. 113–16. Later Persian sources are fully analysed in Gutschmid-Mühlau, "Zur Geschichte der Arsakiden," *ZDMG.*, 1861, pp. 664–689 = Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, iii, 5–42.

[3] Ashk, son of Qobād; Shāpūr (descended from Khusrau ?); Gōdarz, an Ashkānid; Bēzhan, a Kayānid; Narsē; Ormuzd the Great; Arish, i.e. Kay Arshan, confused with Ārish the archer (cf. Marquart, *ZDMG.*, 1895, p. 634); Bahrām Arduvān, (vii, 1922).

[4] The sequence appears to be Gēv-Gōdarz-Bēzhan. Gōtarzes calls himself *Geopothros*, but Herzfeld, *Arch. Mitt.*, iv/2, 60, takes now *Gēv* for the name of the family, and not of a man. Bēzhan figures as the son of Gōdarz (II) in Ṭabarī, i, 710, Mas'ūdī ii, 136, and Ḥamza, 14 (but not 28, 43). In the legend of St. Thomas, apostle of India, Marquart has identified the king Mazdai with Gōdarz, his son *Vēzan* (*Οὐαζάνης*) with Bēzhan and the latter's wife *Μνησάρα* with Manēshak = Manēzha, *Die Chronologie d. alttürk. Inschr.*, 1898, p. 68; *Ērānšahr*, 72, 74. La Vallée Poussin, *L'Inde aux temps des Mauryas*, pp. 276–280, has overlooked this identification. [Marquart, *Eranšahr*, 74: *vēh-zan Εὐγένιος*.]

[5] Nöldeke, *Persische Studien*, ii, 29–34, in *Sitz. Wiener Akademie*, 162 Band, 1892; Nöldeke, *Das Iranische Nationalepos*, § 8; further demonstration in Marquart, *ZDMG.*, 1895, pp. 634–644; idem., *Ērānšahr*, 72–4; see also Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, Copenhagen, 1932, pp. 59, 127–9; and more recently Marquart, "Iberer und Hyrkanier" in *Caucasica*, 9, 1931, pp. 78–113; and Sir J. C. Coyajee, "The house of Gotarzes: a chapter of Parthian history in the Shāhnāmeh," in *JASB.*, 1932, xxviii, No. 10, pp. 207–224. Herzfeld, *Sakastan*, Arch. Mitt., iv/2, 1932, 45–116.

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described as a knight *sans reproche*,[1] is apparently a mask of Gōtarzēs Geopothros of the Bīsutūn inscription.[2]

In Firdausī's list of the Ashkānians (Tehran ed., vii, 1922) Bēzhan quoted after Gōdarz is said to be of Kayānian origin, while, in the section of Kay Khusrau, Bēzhan, the lover of the Turanian princess Manīzha, is son of Gēv b. Gōdarz (ibid., iv, 1065–1140).[3] Two of his sons, Shērōya and Ardashīr, are mentioned in the *Shāh-nāma* (vi, 1489). Firdausī keeps silence on their fate, but in the part of the *Shāh-nāma* (vi, 1523–4) composed by Daqīqī two princes Ardashīr and Shērō fall in battle against Arjāsp. They are said to be the sons of Gushtāsp, but their identity with the sons of Bēzhan is not impossible.

4. Before we proceed with the examination of some characteristic points in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, we should consider whether anything in the history of Marv could throw some light on the family of Mōbad. In Persian epics and the *Book of Kings* Marv does not occupy any place of prominence.[4] Under the Kayānids it is mentioned only once, on the occasion when Kay Kā'ūs sends his armies to the four provincial capitals of Khorāsān (*Shāh-nāma*, ii, 408). The town of Marv is said to be an Alexandrian foundation.[5] Under the Sasanians it figures as a frontier town exposed to eastern invaders, or as a refuge of rebels (Bahrām Chōbēn).[6] Only at the moment of Yezdegerd III's murder (31/651) we have some light on the local organization. The contemporary ruler was Māhōy Sūrī.[7] His rank is variously described as *marzubān* (Ṭab., i, 2873, Balādhuri, 315–16), *dihqān* (Ṭab., i, 2876), or *kanārang* (*Shāh-nāma*, ix, 2983, separate from the *kanārang* of Ṭūs). One of Ṭabarī's sources gives his pedigree as ماهويه بن مافاه بن فيذ[8]; other sources call him Māhōy Abrāz (var. *B.rān*), or even Abū Abrāz, adding that Abrāz was the name of

[1] Nöldeke, *Grund. d. iran. Phil.*, ii, 174: "der Typus aller lobwerten Eigenschaften."

[2] The Kalhur Kurds living in the neighbourhood consider themselves descended from Gōdarz b. Gēv (*sic*). "Under the Kayānians, Gēv was governor of Babylon. . . . His son Ruhhām, at the order of Bahman, led an army to Jerusalem and Egypt. . . . The historians identify him with Bukht al-Naṣr (= Nebuchadnezzar)," *Sharaf-nama*, ed. V. Zernov, p. 317. This statement is based on Ḥamza, 36: Bukht-Naṣr, son of Vēv (= Gēv), son of Jōdarz.

[3] It is true that Gōdarz, ibid., iv, 931, is said to be a relation (*khwēsh*) of Farīburz, son of Kay Kā'ūs; on the other hand his son Gēv was married to Rustam's daughter. She is said to be the mother of Bēzhan. All these pedigrees are naturally fantastic.

[4] Although in the Avesta Margiana (*Mouru*) figures in the list of best countries created by Ahura-Mazdā, see now Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du Vendidad*, 1943, p. 14.

[5] Marquart, *Provincial capitals*, § 12 and p. 45, cf. Pliny, *hist. nat.*, VI, 46 (ed. Detlefsen, 1904, p. 137): Margiane . . . in qua Alexander Alexandriam condiderat; qua diruta a barbaris Antiochus Seleuci filius eodem loco restituit Syrianam interfluente Margo qui corrivatur in Zothale (*var.* Zothalac). Is maluerat illam Antiochiam appellari . . . In hanc Orodes Romanos Crassiana clade captos deduxit.

[6] Ṭabarī-Nöldeke, p. 17; Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdōsis Schāh-nāma*, *sub verbo* Marv.

[7] Nöldeke was ready to interpret his second name as **Sūrēn*, and thus connect Māhōy with the great Parthian family whose fief was Sijistān (?). [As a personal name Sūrī occurs in the family of the rulers of Ghōr and Ghaznī, see *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, tr. Raverty, 316, 438.]

[8] Marquart first restored the father's name as مافناه **Māpanāh*, and later less happily as Māh-Nahīd. [Dr. W. Henning reminds me of the Khwārazmian word *fynd* "a husbandman," which might eventually fit into فيذ < فيند.] Cf. Marquart, *Zābul*, p. 289.

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his son who was his deputy in Marv. In view of the names of Māhōy's father and grandfather recorded in Ṭabarī, it is quite unlikely that the taunt of being a "shepherd's son" (*shubān-zāda*) which Firdausī (ix, 3,000, 3,008) addresses to Māhōy can be taken *à la lettre*.

One fact merits our full attention. The genealogy of the Arsacids appears in the part of Ṭabarī edited by Nöldeke. The latter had recognized that the name rendered in the MSS. as ايران ارار was only an aberrant form of *Bēzhan/Wējan* occurring in other sources, and restored it as ابزان.[1] A very similar complex of letters stands in the part containing the story of Māhōy, but here (Ṭab., i, 2789, f) a different editor restored ارار رار ران as *ابراز *Abrāz*, in view of the supposed etymology *barāz* "a boar", which is most unlikely and is contradicted by Ibn Khurdādhbih.[2]

In the list of shahs confirmed by the Sasanian Ardashīr, I. Khurdādhbih first mentions a Marv-shāh (p. 17), and then (p. 39) adds that his "title was Māhōya, whereas that of the king of Nisā was ارار. The editor, de Goeje, following Ṭab., 810, restored this name also as ابراز, whereas in all probability it is again *Abzān, a variant of the name *Bēzhan*.[3]

Nisā is the heart of the ancient Parthyēnē, and to find in it a ruler called *Bēžan is very interesting. One might criticize I. Khurdādhbih's data on the ground that both in the case of Māhōya and Abrāz/*Abzān he quotes only the *personal* names found in the story of Yezdegerd III. To this one might object that even in Ṭabarī, i, 2877, Māhōya himself is called براز دهقان مرو, "*Abzān, dihqān of Marv" and, i, 2888: مرزبان مرو (نزار var.) ارار. Unless in both cases we have to read *ابوارار, we have to admit that ارار *Abzān* was a local title in Marv-Nisā, identical with the form of Bēzhan's name in the lists of the Arsacids.

If in fact the rulers of Marv-Nisā, towards A.D. 651, bore a title equivalent to the name of Bēzhan, and apparently connected with this eponym, it is tempting to see in them continuators of the Gōdarzian branch, which at one time interrupted the direct succession of the Arsacids. Some explanation of Māhōya's betrayal of his Sasanian sovereign might be found in his consciousness of his ancient origins. Firdausī's *shubān-zāda* might also be understood as a hint at the nomad habits of Māhōya's forefathers.

5. Having sifted the dust of facts bearing on the Arsacid tradition and the history of Marv, we must now turn our attention to the internal evidence of

[1] Ṭabarī, i, 710: "scripsi ابزان quia e nomine بيزن ortum est."

[2] The spellings in the MSS. do not favour the identification of the name with that of Gurāza (< **Varāzak*, Greater Bundahishn, 197.2: *Bairazd i kōhshishn kartār*) whom Firdausi, Tehran ed., iii, 787, calls *sar-tukhma-yi Gēvakān* "the head of the Gēv-ids", and whom the "Prov. capitals", § 21, takes for the founder of Ctesiphon.

[3] A possible improvement of the reading might be *ايزان *Īzān, Ēzān*, cf. Henning, *Ein manich. Bet- und Beichtbuch*, p. 56.

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Vīs u Rāmīn in support of the assumption that the story is connected with the house of Gōdarz-Bēzhan.

In Minovi's edition the name of the king of Marv, Mōbad, is twice (pp. 33, 58) accompanied by the name of origin منيكان **Manīk-ān*. In the present state of our knowledge, the name does not suggest anything, unless we take *Manīk* for a parallel form of *Manīzha*, the spouse of Bēzhan.[1] Metronymic designations are certainly uncommon, but in *Vīs u Rāmīn* itself we have an example in *Vīrō-yi Shahrō*. The use of the mother's name may have been conditioned by the necessity to distinguish between the children of different mothers, and, on the fringe of Turan, the name of Afrāsiyāb's daughter must have carried great weight. Bēzhan himself is one of the most popular figures of Iranian tradition.[2] By way of introduction to the story of Bēzhan and Manīzha, Firdausī, iv, 1065–7, tells how on a stormy night, when he could not sleep, a friend, a " sun-faced moon ", offered to read to him out of a " Pahlavi book " (*daftar-i pahlavī*) a wonderful story which he would then put into verse. The passage suggests that the story formed a special narrative or cycle. Judging by the example of the Sīstān heroes, one might think that legends were current about the progeny of such a hero as Bēzhan.[3] As is usual in epics, the romantic antecedents of a father (Bēzhan) may have been imitated in the adventures of his descendants (Rāmīn ?).

The personal name of the king of Marv, somehow associated with Zoroastrian terminology, is still difficult to explain. Some hints at the sacred character of Marv have been quoted above (A, 754). The poem seems to suggest that outside the gate of Marv there existed a fire-temple built by Jamshēd and dedicated to the Sun (pp. 195, 491). On the other hand, Vīs was buried near the temple-fire Burzīn, and Rāmīn spent his last days near her tomb (pp. 508, 510). The historical temple of Mihr-Burzīn (" the high Sun ") stood at Rēvand (Rāvīn), to the west of Nīshāpūr. There are strong reasons for assuming that this great Fire was somehow connected with that mentioned by Isidore of Charax in the neighbourhood of the ancient home of the Arsacids, the town of Asaak (*Arsak).[4] It looks as if in *Vīs u Rāmīn* two Fires have been made out of one Mihr-Burzīn : one in Marv (*khwarshēd* = *Mihr*, " the

[1] Yasht, 5, 34 : *Arənavāk*, Mod. P. *Arnavāz*. Cf. Pahl. *kanīk* " a girl ", Mod. P. *kanīz*.

[2] Readiness to quote Bēzhan's name explains the gross misunderstanding in the *Shāh-nāma* (ix, 299) where the chief of the Turks attacking Yezdegerd III is called Bēzhan " of Ṭarkhān origin ". Māhōya incites him against his own master by telling him to remember " the ancestral feuds (*kīn-i niyāgān*) ". Here بيژن is an obvious mistake for نيزك طرخان (*Nīžuk*, Chinese *Ni-chou*) on whom see Ṭabarī, i, 1877, and Balādhurī, 420.

[3] *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 80 : Ūjān in Āzarbayjān, founded by Bēzhan ; 144 : Junābid (in the Qūhistān of Khorāsān), built by a son of Gōdarz ; 91 : Hamshahra (near Mūghān), residence of Farhād b. Gōdarz. The Chalāvī dynasty of Māzandarān (1349–1503) claimed to be descendants of Bēzhan (son of Gēv and Rustam's daughter), see *Ẓafar-nāma*, ii, 584 ; they bore such names as Afrāsiyāb and Luhrāsp. " Provincial capitals," ed. Marquart, § 35 : Rakhvat (Qandahār) founded by Rahām, son of Gōdarz.

[4] See Hoffmann, *Pers. Märtyrer*, pp. 290–2. Asaak " in irgend einem historischen oder genealogischen Zusammenhang mit dem Burzīn-Mihr Feuer stand ".

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Sun "), and the other Burzīn (without any detail). If Mōbad was connected with Parthyēne and the original fief of the Arsacids, one might imagine that the sacred fire was under his protection and that he may have had some honorary title resulting from these special attributions. This surmise is merely a hint for future explorers.

References to Isfahān (*vide supra*, A, 757) are also interesting. In Ṭabarī, i, 613, Gōdarz, after his victory over the Turks, is appointed *buzurg-framadhār* and given the fiefs of Gurgān and Isfahān " with their highlands ". Similarly in the *Shāh-nāma*, ii, 377 : Gōdarz receives Isfahān ; iii, 749 : he receives Khorāsān, Rayy, Qum, and Isfahān ; v, 1266 : Isfahān is again conferred on him ; v, 1430 : on his application, K. Khusrau gives Qum and Isfahān to Gēv.[1]

Remembering that Hyrcania occupied an important place in the career of Gōtarzes Geopothros, or even was his home, we can attach some importance to the frequent mentions of Gurgān (Hyrcania) in *Vīs u Rāmīn*. Even proceeding against the " Roman cæsar " Mōbad marches *via* Gurgān.

The characteristic name of Mōbad's paladin Ruhhām-i Ardabīlī, said to be of Kayānian origin, reminds one of Ruhhām, son of Gōdarz, belonging to the cycle of Kay Khusrau (*vide supra*, A, 754). The same may be said of the land *Humāvan in an additional verse in N. Lees edition, etc. (*vide supra*, A, 760).

It would not be safe to go beyond the general analysis of the background of the poem. Any attempts of the later Persian authors to fit the chief heroes of this story into a definite Arsacid or Sasanian reign were utterly futile, for they knew about the Arsacids much less than we do now. Moreover, in the poem Mōbad himself appears as the great king in his own right, independent of any other suzerain.

6. More definite parallels can be quoted for the second centre of the story, the province Māh. The name of the ruler Qārin is noteworthy, for in fact the great Parthian family of Kārēn *was* established in Māh. Ṭabarī, i, 683, states that under the Kayānian king Bishtasp (Gushtāsp) seven great peers (*'aẓīm*) were created, of whom four are enumerated : بهکابیذ (probably : **nahāpet*) in Dihistān,[2] in the territory of Gurgān ; Qārin al-Fahlawī (= *pahlavān*) in Māh Nihāvand ; Sūrēn al-Fahlawī in Sigistān ; Isfandiyār al-Fahlawī in Ray. Dēnawarī, p. 99, mentions a Qārin *al-Jabalī al-Nihāvandi*, as the governor of Khorāsān, Kōmish and Gurgān under Anūshirvān. The second *nisba* of

[1] In the Introduction, p. 26, Gurgānī's patron, a native of Nīshāpūr, does not seem to be acquainted with *Vīs u Rāmīn*, but admits its popularity " in this region (*kishvar*) ", i.e. apparently in Isfahān. The poet himself (a Gurgānī !) knows everything about the story. These regional variances are curious.

[2] See Ibn Isfandiyār, tr. E. G. Browne, 106, نهابذهٔ صولیه in Gurgān at the time of the Omayyads. These later nahāpets were of Turkish origin and belonged to the tribe Ṣūl (perhaps : **Chur* ?). This reference goes counter to Marquart's restoration **Nuhakān-beδ* " der Fürst der Alanen ", see *Iberer und Hyrkanier, Caucasica*, 8, 1931, 98.

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Qārin is particularly interesting, for Nihāvand figures also in *Vīs u Rāmīn* as the area where Vīrō mustered his army before the decisive battle.

Above (A, 749) we have noticed in Gurgānī's text some mysterious references to Damāvand. The first *nisba* which Dīnawarī applies to Qārin may give us a clue to them: possibly the hints have in view some second home of the Qārinids in the Elburz region. Curiously enough the names of the two partners of Vīrō in his polo match with Mōbad (Arghish and Sharvīn) are suggestive of the Caspian provinces. Kūh-i Qārin in Ṭabaristān lay close to Kūh-i Sharvīn.[1]

In the year A.D. 50 the Arsacid governor of Mesopotamia, Carenes (i.e. *Kārēn*), who, together with the kings Abkar of Edessa and Izates of Adiabēnē (= Assyria), supported the Roman candidate Meherdates, was defeated by Gōtarzes somewhere near the Zagros pass (*vide supra*, p. 24).[2] This episode is strongly reminiscent of the death of Qārin in the battle of Dēnavar (pp. 65, 190): perchance, the exploit of Gōtarzēs had been put to Mōbad's credit. Even Rāmīn's expedition to Mosul and Syria may reflect the tense relations which existed between Gōtarzes and the kings Izates and Abkar. Ruhhām, son of Gōdarz, was supposed to have captured Jerusalem (*vide supra*, p. 30).

Vīs u Rāmīn definitely cold-shoulders Qārin, and this attitude might find its explanation in the anti-Kārēnid feeling surviving among the family of the real Gōtarzes.[3] But the story is not very complimentary to the members of the royal family of Marv either. Mōbad is both brutal and weak and no veil is thrown over Rāmīn's sorry behaviour on several occasions. More respect and sympathy (again not unmixed, pp. 77–80) are reserved for the family of Qārin's wife Shahrō, said to be descended from the mythical king Jamshēd. As the *Shahr-bānū* she takes precedence over the "shah's wife" (pp. 31–2), to say nothing of her own husband. No indication is given in the text of her direct parentage or of her original home. Under the Kayānian kings we hear of the paladins Ṭōs and Gustahm (Vistahm), sons of Nōdhar, who continued the line of the previous dynasty (*Pēshdādhiyān*).[4] The Pahlavi list of provincial capitals, ed. Marquart, § 14, attributes the foundation of the town of Ṭōs to the homonymous son of Nōdhar. It is likely that Shahrō's origin should be

[1] See Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, under Karen, Arghush, and Sharvīn. In early Islamic times a dynasty said to be descended from Qārin b. Sūkhrā, "whom Anūshirvān had established in Ṭabaristān," ruled in the Kūh-i Qārin. Its last representative, the famous Māzyār, was executed in A.D. 839, see Minorsky in *E.I.* On the other hand, one should remember that Zohāk was considered the founder of the town of Kōmish (Dāmghān), see Marquart, *Provincial Capitals*, § 18.

[2] Herzfeld, *Am Ṭhor von Asien*, 1920, p. 46: at Bīṣutūn (?). On the controversial question of the River Kormas, behind which Gōtarzēs was expecting his enemies, I have recently spoken in *BSOAS.*, xi/3, p. 660: I restore it as **Tornas* and identify it with the Diyāla. On Kārēn, cf. also Herzfeld, *Arch. Mitt.*, iv/2, 64–7.

[3] Subtle genealogists had, however, connected Gōdarz with the eponym of the Kārēn family. In the meantime, Kārēn was made the son of the famous smith Kāva. Even the latter seems to be a mere sublimation of the "Kayānian banner" *dirafsh-i Kāviyān*, understood as the "Banner of Kāva". Cf. Christensen, *Les Kayânides*, pp. 43, 128.

[4] To this family belonged Sōkhrā (Sūfrā) of Shīrāz, one of the generals of the Sasanian Pērōz, cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 120.

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sought along these lines. On the other hand, Jamshēd's field of activity was connected with Fārs, and this may be a subsidiary explanation of the spurious verse (N. Lees, p. 171, omitted in Minovi, 173) in which a son called Sāsān figures among Shahrō's progeny. Both the attitude of the story towards the rulers of Marv and this last interpolation may indicate that the original was tampered with in Sasanian times.[1]

7. We have reached the end of our survey. Already in the fourteenth century A.D. Ḥamdullāh Mustaufī felt that the story was connected with the time of *Bēzhan b. Gōdarz,[2] and our task has been: (1) to trace the two planes of the Gōdarzian lore—one genuinely Parthian, and the other fantastically projected into the time of Kay-Khusrau, (2) to elucidate the tradition of the rulers of Marv, and (3) to scan all the details supporting the thesis of the Parthian (Arsacid) background of the story of Vīs and Rāmīn.

To sum up our argument:—

(*a*) The story of *Vīs u Rāmīn*, as shown by its geographical background, belongs to the Arsacid epoch.

(*b*) It is probable that it recounts the adventures of some scion of the branch founded by Gōdarz and only indirectly related to the main Arsacid line.

(*c*) The patronymic of the king of Marv, Mōbad *Manīkān*, may point to his descent from the Gōdarzid Bēzhan and his wife Manīzha.

(*d*) The house of Māh (Media), to which belongs Vīs, is that of the Kārēnids, one of the seven noble families under the Arsacids.

(*e*) Any further identifications are risky, as the Pahlavi source of the poet Gurgānī proceeded in the usual epic way, altering the sequence of events and the personal connections of the heroes. His picture is true only as a general setting of the events.

Appendix I

The usually inaccurate Daulat-shāh, ed. Browne, pp. 60, 130, is responsible for the unwarranted statement that a second poem of Vīs and Rāmīn was composed by Niẓāmī al-'Aṙūdhī (the author of the *Chahār-maqāla*), or even by Niẓāmī of Ganja. Ḥājjī Khalīfa, vi, 468, made the mistake even worse. M. Qazvīnī, the learned editor of the *Chahār maqāla* (Introduction, p. 18), has completely done away with all this confusion. Ḥājjī Khalīfa in his notice adds that *Vīs u Rāmīn* was translated by the Ottoman poet Lāmi'ī, who died in 938/1531; the paragraph is badly worded and might perpetuate the impression that Lāmi'ī's aberrant passages reflect some ancient source other than Gurgānī. This is not the case. Lāmi'ī has written a modernized poem of his own, taking some episodes from Gurgānī.

[1] However, Iṣṭakhr figures in the list of Vīrō's allies (pp. 57–8). [The name Sasan appears in the Śaka dynasty of Gandhāra (*circa* 20–80), founded by Gundofarr, Herzfeld, *Arch. Mitt.*, iv/2, 105.]

[2] Note the non-Firdausian pattern of this genealogy (*not* Bēzhan *b. Gēv* b. Gōdarz.), *vide supra*, p. 25.

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One passage only of Lāmi'ī's poem is accessible to me in the original (Gibb, *HOP.*, vi, 131–2). It describes the courting of Shahrō by the king of Gurgān, and corresponds to Mōbad's conversation with Shahrō (Minovi, 32–3). Not only is Lāmi'ī's metre identical with that of Gurgānī, but some of the verses show a direct dependence on the latter's version :

نسیمدن خجل باد بهاری صچندن منکسر عود قماری . . .
کر اولسک بگه دلدار ای دلافروز شبم قدر اوله روزم عید نوروز

In Minovi, p. 32, verse 27, and p. 33, verse 12 :—

هم از رویش خجل باد بهاری هم از مویش خجل عود قماری . . .
اگر با روی تو باشم شب و روز شب من روز باشد روز نوروز

For the general contents of Lāmi'ī's poem I could only consult its abstract in Hammer, *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst*, 1837, ii, 63–89 (abridged in Gibb, *HOL.*, iii, 357–360).[1]

Shahrō, the wife of Munqad (?), shah of Marv, praises the beauty of her daughter Vīsa to the shah of Jurjān. On her return to Marv she betroths Vīsa to her nephew Vīrō. The shah of Jurjān sends his own nurse to Marv as a spy and then attacks Marv. Munqad and his wife are besieged in the castle Mahābād (*sic*), whence they flee to Herat. The local king Fīrūz poisons Vīrō. The general of the shah of Jurjān, Bahrām, attacks king Fīrūz and kills him. Another Bahrām (of Marv) ascends the throne of Herat and marries Fīrūz's daughter Shams-bānū. Munqad, Shahrō, and Vīsa flee to Tūrān. Rāmīn, the son of the khan of Turkestan, falls in love with Vīsa. The khan puts his son under the tuition of a " perfect shaykh ", but Vīsa continues to correspond with him. Finally Rāmīn escapes to Herat and, after a number of adventures among the evil *ṣūfīs* and honest *qalandars*, finds Vīsa and marries her.

As one can judge by this resumé, the geographical background and the relationship of the heroes are drastically modified. The whole tone of the story is changed : instead of expressing the intensity of human passions, Lāmi'ī tries to amuse and edify. The end of his poem is tinged with mystic reflexions and is full of abstract discourses on justice, generosity, etc. The poem, characteristic of the time of Sultan Sulaymān, is of no value for the study of the original legend, whose framework has happily survived in Gurgānī's version.

Cambridge, 5.ii.1946.

Appendix II

1. My friend M. Minovi has kindly lent me a photographic copy of Baron R. Stackelberg's article on *Vīs-u Rāmīn* (*Drevnosti vostochnïya*, Moscow, 1896, II/1, pp. 10–23) to which I refer in my Introduction. The author used the Indian edition and Graf's article. He states that " from the marrying of a

[1] Hammer, ii, 63, commits new mistakes by saying that the original poems on Vīs and Rāmīn were written by the " great " Niẓāmī (of Ganja) and by Faṣīḥ Jurjānī, a descendant of the author of the *Qābūs-nāma*!

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still unborn daughter of Shahrō [cf. Minovi, 49, verse 88] results the tragical sin of Mobad whom Fate visits with grievous punishments ". The final triumph of the lovers is not conditioned by any " moral prevalence over the other dramatis personæ ". Mobad is presented in the poem in a rather comic light. However, the " simplicity and *naïveté* with which various deceits and stratagems (of the lovers) are told . . . constitutes, in our view, the outstanding merit of the poem ".

The chief importance of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* consists in its characterization of ancient Persian culture. While the *Shāh-nāma* acquaints us with the " external side of Persian life, idyllic and lyric motifs prevail in Gurgānī's poem in which the leading role belongs to women. Rāmīn, as a typical Persian noble, is not only a mighty hunter, but a lover of women and wine [see below 4].

On the whole, the external and internal background of the *Shāh-nāma* and *Vīs* is identical. The epoch and the manners reflected in the poem are those of the Sasanian Persia. Zoroastrian-Parsi views prevail in the poem, such as marriage of brothers and sisters, the influence of stars on men's destiny. Mercury is especially mentioned as Mobad's *dabīr* (Indian, 12/Minovi, 28). Persian and Arabic names of the planets alternate as in the *Shāh-nāma*. Zoroastrian views are reflected in such passages as that describing the temporary impurity of Vīs (Ind. 46/Min. 71), cf. Vendidad, fargard 16; the purifying quality of fire (Ind. 136/Min. 193), and the influence of the evil eye (Ind. 261/Min. 343). The preparation of a talisman by the nurse is illustrated by a passage in the *Gāthās*, 51 (Vohuxšaθrā), 9–10, where fire and iron are linked up with mythological motifs.

With some misunderstanding Stackelberg interprets the passage in the Introduction concerning the lack of " poetical art " in the original of the poem as a would-be hint at the " absence of versified works in the middle Persian literature " [1] (see above our explanation).

" In spite of the Persian spirit of *Vīs-u Rāmīn*—at least in its present form—there is a possibility that the story penetrated into Persia from outside, namely from India. Certainly such an admission cannot be based merely on references to the Indian places [e.g. ملون, p. 241—apparently misread ملتان—whereas Gurgānī is referring to *dībā-yi mulavvan*, Minovi, 320] or plants (نیلوفر) which occur in other Persian writers as well. But, as the substance of the romance of Vīs has nothing in common with Old Persian epics, its heroes not being connected with the legends and the mythology of ancient Iranians, and as, on the other hand, the story in its general lines coincides with the contents of *Tristan and Isolde* we are inclined to admit—in spite of the total iranicization of the groundwork (*obshchiy stroy*) of the poem—that the common source both of the Persian and the Western tale was in India. It is known that India furnished to Asia and Europe an inexhaustible store of fairy-tales and poetical subjects." At present *Vīs-u Rāmīn* is appreciated only in India; it is forgotten in Persia, although the dictionaries (*farhang*) show that it used to be read in its time. " We cannot say whether later Persian poets have referred to it " (but see below 2).

The simplicity of the language in *Vīs-u Rāmīn* may be responsible for the lack of interest in it on the part of sophisticated readers. Old prefixes زی فرا باز

[1] With reference to Nöldeke, *Persische Studien*, ii, 11.

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are common in Gurgānī's text; in some cases *v* is preferred to *b*: ورنا (for برنا), واشام (Armen. *varshamak*), اورنجن (Armen. *aparanjan*). Personal names in *ō*(*y*) are frequent. Of other names the author refers to اذرباذ (< Aturpat), ایزدیار (see Sebeos, ed. Patkanian, 76, etc.), بهروز (Pahl. *Rōčvēh*), فرخ زاد (Sebeos *xoroxzad*), and زرستون—" with some doubt, we quote here the Pahlavi name of *Zarstan*, daughter of Arjāsp." [Cf. *Ayātkār-i Zarērān*, ed. Pagliaro, 1925, § 71: Zarstan, daughter of the Khionite King Arjāsp.]

2. Of references to *Vīs-u Rāmīn* in later literatures Stackelberg himself found the well-known verse (Indian ed. 342) [1]:

اگر صد سال گبر آتش فروزد ✲ سرانجامش همان آتش بسوزد

imitated in the *Gulistān* (i, story 16, ed. Platts, p. 26) where the second hemistich is improved:

چو یک دم اندران افتد بسوزد

As a parallel Stackelberg quotes the answer of the Magians to the Armenian bishop Leontius: " and if we come close to it (i.e. the Fire) and prostrate ourselves before it, it reduces us to ashes." [2]

In point of fact references to *Vīs-u Rāmīn* are fairly numerous in Persian literature. Perhaps the earliest quotation, in which Gurgānī is mentioned by name, is in that curious compilation: *Kitāb-i Samak-i 'Ayyār*. The author (*mu'allif*, *rāwī*, *muṣannif*) of the story is Ṣadaqa ibn Abil-Qāsim of Shīrāz, but it was reduced to its final form by Farāmarz son of Khudādād son of 'Abdullāh al-Kātib al-Arrajānī (*jam' āvaranda-yi kitāb*) who began his work on 4th Jam. i 585/20 June 1189. On fol. 86 of the unique MS. of the Bodleian (Bod. Ouseley 379, f. 88) three verses are quoted from the poem of *Fakhr-i Gurgānī*, corresponding to verses 301, 302, and 300 on p. 358 of Minovi's edition.

References to *Vīs* in Jalāl al-dīn Rūmī are common, although Gurgānī's authorship is not mentioned. *Dīvān*, ed. Nicholson, p. 4:—

ندیدهٔ تو دواوین (sic) وَیس ورامین
نخواندهٔ تو حکایت وامق وعذرا

In the *Mathnawī*, ed. Nicholson, iii, 228: *Vīsa*; iv, 1828: **Vays* rhyming with *Uways*; v, 2980: *Vīs* rhyming with *Bilīs* (< Iblis).

3. H.E. S. H. Taqizadeh draws my attention to a curious verse (Minovi, 44) in which the astrologers fix the day for Vīs's betrothal to her brother Vīrō:—

چو گردشهای ایشانرا بدیدند ✲ ز آذرماه روزی برگزیدند
کجا آنگه زگشت روزگاران ✲ درآذرماه بودی نوبهاران

" When the star-gazers considered the course (of the stars) they chose one day of the month Ādhar, because in that epoch, owing to the march of time,

[1] In Min., 443, the second hemistich runs هم او روزی بدان آتش بسوزد

[2] Elisæus (d. A.D. 480), ch. viii. Stackelberg translates from the text ed. by Kananian, p. 355. Similarly in the Russian translation, Tiflis, 1853, p. 296, but cf. the translation of V. Langlois, 1869, ii, 241: [" si on lui donne peu de nourriture il a très faim et si nous ne lui offrons rien il s'éteint tout-à-fait.] Si ensuite nous allons auprès de lui et que nous l'adorions il nous brûle. . . ."

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springtime occurred in the month of Ādhar." My learned friend writes[1]: "From this one might gather that the composition of the original book took place after the fourth century A.D., because the beginning of spring, i.e. the vernal equinox, does not coincide with the first of Ādhar before A.D. 507; nor can it coincide with Ādhar (even with the last days of the latter) before A.D. 388. As the insertion of the usual epagomena did not take place before A.D. 399, Ādhar could not, even legally, be included in the spring. It is possible of course that the book has gone through several redactions, and that that period, namely from A.D. 400 to 508, refers to the Sasanian *rifacimento* of the tale."

The point brought up by the author of the exhaustive study on Persian calendars is naturally most interesting, but he himself opens me a back-door out of my *shish-dar*. We are still at the beginning of our studies of *Vīs-u Rāmīn*, and possibly the astrological hints in the descriptions of the night on which Mobad carries away Vīs from her castle (Minovi, 80–3) will also yield their secrets some day.[2]

4. The severe judgment which Nöldeke had passed on *Vīs-u Rāmīn* is well known (*Das Schahname*, 2nd ed., § 32). "In a very unpleasant manner are depicted the joys of drinking bouts of husband and wife for whole weeks in *Vīs-u Rāmīn*, a poem the æsthetical value of which cannot be considered higher than its morals." To this unmerited verdict one might oppose the episodes like that when youthful Vīs, still faithful to her betrothal with Vīrō, seeks isolation from old Mobad and rebuts the intrigues of the nurse who wants her to meet Ramin (Minovi, 96, etc.).

As a portraiture of Parthian manners one might quote Plutarch's description of Surena who "was no ordinary person, but in wealth, family, and reputation the second man in the kingdom, and in courage and prowess the first, and for bodily stature and beauty no man like him. Whenever he travelled privately, he had one thousand camels to carry his baggage, two hundred chariots for his concubines, one thousand completely armed men for his life-guards, and a great many more light-armed . . .". Then again Plutarch speaks of Surena as "keeping behind him a whole Parthian Sybaris in his many wagons full of concubines" and refers to his van, "fierce and terrible with spears and arrows," in contrast to his rear "terminating in loose women and castanets, music of the lute, and midnight revellings" (Crassus, "Dryden's translation," London, 1902, iii, 356, 373). Surely *Vīs-u Rāmīn* does not describe any scenes of loose manners and promiscuous amusements, but a conflict of earnest and exclusive passions to match with those of the Celtic lovers of the West.

5. I have to thank several other friends who communicated to me their most kind remarks on my article. Their appreciation shows that I have played my part in the *course au flambeau*.

6. On my seventieth birthday, I dedicate this article to my wife.

5.ii.1947

[1] I translate his Persian.

[2] There exists now an excellent Italian rendering of this passage by F. Gabrieli, *Annali del R. Istit. Orient. di Napoli*, Nuova Serie, i, 1940, 253–8.

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VĪS-U-RĀMĪN (III)

By V. MINORSKY

IN my articles on Fakhr al-dīn Gurgānī's poem *Vīs-u-Rāmīn* [1] I made a point of its realistic geographical and historical background which, in my opinion, connects it with the Arsacid tradition. One of the important places in the story is the castle of Gūrāb in which the heroine Vīs was kept and which belonged to the family of her future rival Gul. Muslim geographers still referred to this place lying at the junction of the roads from Hamadān and Nihāvand to Karaj, and Gūrāb is mentioned in the course of the military operations of the Seljuk Sulṭān Mas'ūd (towards 541/1146), see *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 242. In more recent times its titles to distinction had been forgotten.

1. At this place I wish only to reproduce the photograph of the site taken at my request by my lamented friend A. C. Edwards († 11th September, 1951), who in his letter (dated Hamadan, 21st July, 1948) wrote : ' Jurab is situated about 5 miles from Malāyir, on the new Malayir–Sultanabad [2] road. The ruined castle is a very substantial affair. It is, indeed, the most imposing *qal'a* that I have seen in Persia and certainly [? V.M.] the oldest. It can be seen for miles. It must have been circular or slightly oval in shape, with a diameter which I identified as about 40 metres. There is little left of the walls or battlements which must have surrounded the top of the eminence. I should imagine that the fortress was built on the top of an already existing hillock to which (probably) more earth was added to raise it to the present imposing height '.

Gūrāb, as situated at crossing of the roads, on the southern approaches to Hamadan, was certainly an important strategical point. I think some day it will be found that a castle existed here even at the time when the pre-Iranian ' Zagros peoples ' were dominant in the region. It is curious that our poem has preserved the memory of the ancient glory of Gūrāb. On the other hand, this detail enhances the realistic tendencies of the old legend.

2. The story of Vīs and Rāmīn, as narrating the love of a young queen for a young relative of her old husband, naturally reminds one of the similar plot of Tristan and Isolde,[3] and is bound to occupy the attention of specialists in western European medieval lore. Recently I had the occasion to examine the introduction to a special collectanea on the motif of Tristan and Isolde [4] in which O. M. Freidenberg has conveniently summed up the characteristic

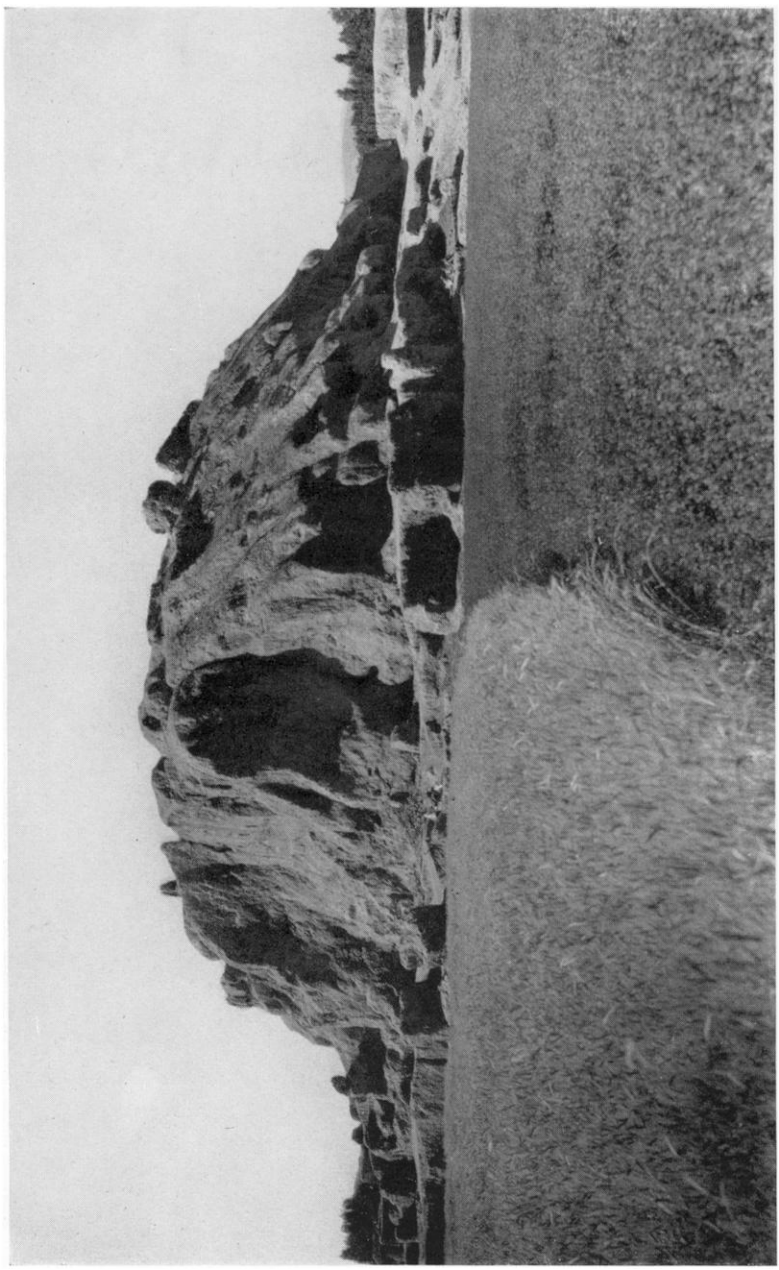
[1] See *BSOAS.*, 1946, xi/4, and 1947, xii/1.

[2] Sultānābād (now called Erāg) is the medieval Karaj Abī-Dulaf, as indicated by the name of the river کرہ رود (i.e. * کرج رود) in its neighbourhood.

[3] See *BSOAS.*, xi/4, p. 4.

[4] Тристан и Исольда. Труды Института языка и мышления, ii, 1932, p. 15 (in the R.A.S. Library). I leave aside O. M. Freidenberg's special endeavour to interpret the poem as a cosmic myth (Sun-Water-Region Underground).

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JŪRĀB (GŪRĀB)
South of Hamadān.

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features of the legend. In addition to the basic, and very general, likeness in the romantic situation, I have found in Dr. Freidenberg's longish record only two points of similarity with *Vīs-u-Rāmīn* : the episode of a maid (in our case the nurse) deputizing for her mistress on the marital couch, and the episode of the hero temporarily forgetting the heroine. Tristan's retirement to the forest might perhaps be compared with Rāmīn's retirement to Daylam. The results of the comparison look somewhat meagre. Isolated details can certainly belong to the common stock of human fantasy, which is not unlimited as regards situations in a three-cornered love.

The general atmosphere of the two poems is very different. Apart from the talisman built by the crafty nurse (a native of Khūzān), *Vīs-u-Rāmīn* is devoid of magic or symbolic elements which abound in the Celtic legend. The sea which fills in the background of *Tristan and Isolde* is naturally absent in the Iranian story. But one of the curious features in Gurgānī's poem is Rāmīn's patiently-borne ordeal in the snow before Vīs's residence. Snow as an element of a romantic story is unexpected in purely Persian surroundings. Here the imagination of the original story-teller seems to move in the framework of the Parthian north.[1]

[1] H. W. Bailey, *BSOAS.*, xiii/2 (1950), p. 403, has added the name of * اسب تخاره 'Tokharian horses' to my list of geographical epithets in the poem (*BSOAS.*, xi/4, p. 23). W. B. Henning, *Asia Major*, ii/2 (1952), p. 178, has quoted the name *Wērōy* (*Worōd*) in support of my attribution of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* to the Parthian epoch. The name of the town Burūjird (south of Gūrāb) is derived from the same personal name. The *Ẓafar-nāma*, i, 586, 594, 812, still spells it : وروجرد.

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VĪS-U RĀMĪN (IV)[1]

By V. MINORSKY

Later developments

1. Two articles by M. Minovi
2. The new edition of the poem (1959)
3. Pahlavi and the ' language of Fahla '
4. Gurgānī and Toghrīl-bek (M. Molé)

1. *Two articles by M. Minovi*

The promised vol. II of Professor Minovi's edition of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* has not yet appeared and the variants of the important MS of Istanbul remain unknown. On the other hand we owe to the editor two interesting articles shedding light on the poem of Gurgānī.

(A) In the first of these (see the Tehran monthly *Sukhan*, VI, 1, 1333/1954, 13–21, and VI, 2, 1333/1954, 129–37) M. Minovi reviews the scanty data on the origin of the story and on the biography of Fakhr al-dīn Gurgānī, and gives a summary of the poem.

He admits the possibility of the Parthian origin of the plot[2] and makes the interesting suggestion that the original which Gurgānī had before him was in Middle Persian transcribed in Arabic characters (Pāzand), though I personally still believe that the text used by Gurgānī was an antiquated Persian (*fārsī*) translation of the original Pahlavi.

Drawing attention to the fact that the poet in his conclusion calls himself young (*javān*) but elsewhere speaks of his disappointments in love experienced ' many days ago ', and taking it that the poem was completed in 446/1054, Minovi tentatively assumes that the author was born *circa* 406/1016 (?).

Already in 1312/1933 Professor Badī' al-zamān in his *Sukhan va sukhanvarān*, II, 1, p. 5, referred to the queer story which Farīd al-dīn 'Aṭṭār, in his *Ilāhī-nāma*, tells about Fakhr al-dīn Gurgānī. The poet living at the court of the ' shāh ' of Gurgān was suddenly overcome by love for one of the king's minions. The king hastened to give his *ghulām* to the poet, but the beautiful slave perished in an accident. In despair (*divānagī* ' madness ') Fakhr al-dīn wandered in the wilderness with the story of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* on his tongue (*vird-i zabān*). Minovi is sceptical about the story told by 'Aṭṭār in a mystical spirit, but it merits some attention as indicating Gurgānī's connexions in his homeland. The king in question might have been one of the later Ziyārids.[3] The great sensibility of Gurgānī may be also reflected in this anecdote.

[1] For parts I–III see *BSOAS*, XI, 4, 1946, 741–63 ; XII, 1, 1947, 20–35 ; XVI, 1, 1954, 91–2.

[2] To the guess in this direction found in *Tārīkh-i guzīda* he adds the similar utterings of Ḥājjī Khalīfa and the *Haft iqlīm*.

[3] Minūchihr 403–20/1012–29 ; Anūshirvān 420–41/1029–49 ; Dārā (one year). The Seljūqid Toghrīl appeared in Gurgān already in 433/1041, Ibn al-Athīr, IX, 340, and Kay Kāvus b. Dārā, who was considered as a ruler in 441–62/1049–69, and died *circa* 475/1082, led the life of a knight-errant fighting infidels first on the Indian, and then on the Transcaucasian front.

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Even less certain is the time of Gurgānī's connexion with a certain *Thiqat al-mulk Shahriyār* whom he served apparently as a kind of literary adviser, reading and composing poetry for him. He finally derided his patron for his stupidity in a pungent satire quoted by 'Aufi. Minovi tentatively takes this *Thiqat al-mulk* for the ra'īs of Rayy *Thiqat al-mulk Abū Muslim Surūshyārī*,[1] and the result of such a surmise would be that Gurgānī was still alive *circa* 460–70/1067–77. It seems somewhat strange, however, that Niẓām al-mulk would have given his daughter to such an asinine person as described in the satire. The episode might better suit the early years of Gurgānī's career than the time when he had *Vīs-u Rāmīn* to his credit. *Thiqat al-mulk* is the title of several vazirs and dignitaries of the Ghaznavid and Seljūqid time, but its combination with the name Shahriyār (not Abū Muslim!) is unexpected. This princely name was typical for the rulers of the Bāvandid dynasty of Ṭabaristān, and reading (with an *iḍāfat*) *Thiqat al-mulk-i Shahriyār* 'the Confidence of State of Shahriyār' one might expect that the *Thiqat al-mulk* in question had previously served under the Bāvandid Shahriyār III b. Dārā (A.D. 965–1006), or had some connexion with the Bāvandids of the collateral line whose names and sequence are still insufficiently known. In this case we should lose the *terminus ad quem* of Gurgānī's life but acquire some additional indication of his early adventures in the neighbourhood of his native Gurgān, and in the country where the use of Pahlavi is attested in several inscriptions (see my article in *BSOAS*, XI, 4, 1946, 741–63).

(B) In the second article, which appeared in *Majalla-yi adabiyāt* (Tehran), I, 3, 1333/1954, 62–77, Professor Minovi gives, with an ample commentary, the Arabic text of an ode which Abū Nuwās addressed to a Zoroastrian youth. The poem bristles with Middle Persian words.[2] Abū Nuwās appeals to Bihrūz in the name of the planets, of Iranian festivals, etc., and finally (ix, v. 19) of

و ما يتلون فى شروين دستبى و فرجردات را مين و ويس

i.e. 'what one reads concerning Sharwīn of Dastabī,[3] and in the "sections" (perhaps "episodes", *farjardāt*) of Rāmīn and Vīs'. Abū Nuwās (see *EI*)

[1] cf. M. Mo'īn in his commentary on *Chahār-maqāla*, Tehran, 1336/1957, 197.

[2] The words quoted in the poem seem to belong to the archaic stock of terms surviving in Zoroastrian circles rather than to the actual speech in southern Persia *circa* A.D. 800. Cf. Henning, 'Mitteliranisch', in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, IV, 1, 1958, 86, 'seltene und altertümliche Wörter'.

[3] Sharwīn was the ruler, or governor, of Dastabī (apparently **Dasht-pey* 'the edge of the plain'), as was called the region between Qazvīn and Hamadān. The Muslim authors referred to by Minovi (Dīnāvarī, Ḥamza, Ibn al-Faqīh, and the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*) somewhat vaguely describe the background of Sharwīn's adventures. Much clearer is Procopius, *De bello persico*, I, ch. ii, who confirms that the Byzantine emperor Arcadius during his fatal illness placed his infant son Theodosius under the protection of Yezdegerd I who honestly discharged his obligations. Arcadius died in A.D. 408, and Yezdegerd I ('the Sinner') ruled A.D. 399–421. It is quite possible that Sharwīn acted in Byzantium as a representative of his king and that popular lore embellished his exploits. Cf. Bury, *The history of the later Roman Empire*, 1923, II, 2; Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 1944, 355; A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, Madison, 1952, 96.

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was born in southern Persia and lived in 130–90/747–801 (or 145–99/762–814) and his poem belongs probably to the earlier part of his career. We have thus a very important indication that the story was popular in Iran over two and a half centuries before Gurgānī. Consequently any surmise concerning the invention of the story by Gurgānī (Christensen) falls to the ground. The term *farjardāt* ' sections, fragments, episodes ', might indicate the state in which it was preserved.[1]

2. *The new edition of the poem (1959)*

Twenty-four years after the publication of the text by Professor Minovi, a new edition of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* was produced by the scholar of the new generation M. J. Maḥjūb, Tehran, 1337/January 1959. In his extensive introduction (105 pp.) the editor sums up all the known data on Gurgānī and his poem. He has considerably increased the number of quotations from Gurgānī's poem, or direct imitations of it by later poets. They clearly show the spell which Gurgānī has cast over his posterity including Niẓāmī in his *Khusrau and Shīrīn*. The text (pp. 1–388) is followed by a revised translation of parts I–III of my essay ' *Vīs-u Rāmīn* ' made by M. Muqarrabi [2] (pp. 389–440), notes on the text (pp. 441–62), a list of readings differing from Minovi's text (pp. 463–8), an index of archaic words (pp. 469–80), and detailed indexes of names, places, tribes, books, etc. (pp. 480–503).

The text of Maḥjūb differs from that established by Minovi chiefly in restoring some variants offered by the early Indian edition, and one regrets that the Istanbul MS remained inaccessible to the editor.[3]

No important facts concerning Gurgānī have emerged from the re-examination of the sources but M. J. Maḥjūb has reminded us of a reference to the patron of the poet, discovered by Professor Badī' al-zamān in his *Sukhan va sukhanvarān*, II, 1, 1–14, and the addendum at the beginning of the volume. This valuable book appeared in 1312/1933 but was still inaccessible to me in 1946. The learned author identifies the dedicatee of the poem with the governor of Iṣfahān whom Nāṣir-i Khusrau mentions in his *Safar-nāma*, ed. Berlin, 1314/1922, p. 138. Nāṣir-i Khusrau returning from his pilgrimage via Basra visited Iṣfahān in Ṣafar 444/June 1052 after the capture of the town by Toghrïl. He speaks with praise of its young and cultured governor appointed by Toghrïl. He was called Khwāja 'Amīd (of Nīshāpūr) and apparently belonged to the family of secretaries having served under the rulers of Ghūr (*az dabiran-i*

[1] Somewhat free is the interpretation of Abū Nuwās by his early commentator Ḥamza of Iṣfahān (b. towards 280–90/833–902, d. towards 350–60/961–71) who says that the exploits of Sharwīn were ' sung ' and that the *farjardāt* of Vīs and Rāmīn were like *qaṣīdas*, which would suggest that they formed a series of poetical ' odes, or ballads '. Still more vague are the Arabic verses attributed to a poet of Iṣfahān and quoted in the anthology (*Muḥaḍarāt al-udabā*) of Rāghib Iṣfahānī who died in 502/1108 (Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 1943, 2nd ed., 343): a company of noble Arabs asks a slave (*ghulām*) to sing to them in Persian and to pour out for them wine of the kind which Vīs and Rāmīn drank in the morning and in the evening.

[2] First published by M. Muqarrabi in *Farhang-i Irān-zamīn*, IV, 1–2, 1335/1956, 3–73.

[3] A copy of this MS was obtained by Minovi soon after the publication of his text.

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Sūrī). Maḥjūb takes up the identification of his teacher but is somewhat sceptical about my reference to Ibn al-Athīr, x, 23, because of the difference in the name of 'Amīd's father (*Muḥammad* in Gurgānī rhyming with *al-Muayyad*), but *al-Ḥusayn* in Ibn al-Athīr) and also because Gurgānī and Nāṣir-i Khusrau speak of him as a ' young man ', which would be in some contradiction with the report of Ibn al-Athīr, x, 23. The latter says under the year 456/1064, that when the daughter of the caliph (betrothed to Toghrïl) was to be returned from Iṣfahān to Baghdād the dignitary appointed by the new sultan Alp Arslān to accompany her died of smallpox, and in his stead the king sent the 'Amīd al-Muẓaffar who also fell victim to the same disease. Maḥjūb rightly thinks that such a commission would suit only a man well on in years but he seems to forget that between the capture of Iṣfahān in 443/1051 by Toghrïl and the hurried appointment of the 'Amīd by Alp Arslān in 456 thirteen years had passed and the 'Amīd must have crossed over the limit between ' young age ' and ' the age of discretion '. Consequently I do not see any obstacle to finding in Ibn al-Athīr the end of the story of the man who sponsored the composition of *Vīs-u Rāmīn*.

In any case the plentiful and careful apparatus of the new edition of the poem will be of great utility to students of the poem of Gurgānī.

3. *Pahlavi and the ' language of Fahla '*

Among the reviews which have appeared of Maḥjūb's edition we have to mention that of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīn-kūb [1] who concentrated his attention on the translation of my article and in his short notice raised a number of difficult and doubtful points to contest the Parthian origin of the initial version of the story of Vīs and Rāmīn.

(A) The reviewer points to the obscurity of Gurgānī's explanations concerning the ' Pahlavi ' text in which the story of the two lovers had been transmitted. He thinks that ' from the time of Firdausī [2] to that of Ḥāfiẓ, and perhaps later ', the term ' Pahlavi ' was used in Iran not for ' Middle Persian ' but for the ' local ' language of the province Fahla, which according to Ibn al-Muqaffa' [3] comprised Iṣfahān, Rayy, Hamadān, Māh-Nihāvand, and Āzarbāyjān, and was distinct from the spoken and written language of the priests (*mobad*).

[1] See *Sukhan*, IX, 10, 1337/1958, 1015–18.

[2] This is not exact with regard to Firdausī and Z.-k. himself makes admissions to this effect.

[3] Z.-k. refers to *al-Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, p. 13. Cf. also Yāqūt, III, 925, who names as his authority the book of Ḥamza called *al-Tanbīh* (now lost). Yāqūt gives another quotation from Shīrawayh b. Shahriyār (d. 509/1115) who this time definitely excludes from Fahla such regions as Rayy, Iṣfahān, etc. Cf. also the changed toponymy of *al-Jabal* (Māh, Media) in I. Rusta (beginning of the tenth century), p. 106. The problem of the history of the term *Pahlavī* was considered by Professor Ohlshausen in ' Parthava und Pahlav ', in *Monatsberichte der Preuss. Akad.*, 1877, 727–83), but since then a mass of new material has awaited a new examination. The classification of languages by I. Muqaffa' still remains obscure. Nöldeke called it a ' leider seltsame Systematik ' and supposed some lacuna in the text, see his ' Pehlevi ' in *Aufsätze z. persischen Geschichte*, 1887, 150. Henning, op. cit., 95, thinks that Ibn al-Muqaffa' referred to the lands occupied by the Arsacids, but the names of ' Parthia proper ' fell out of the enumeration. In any case I. al-Muqaffa' must have had in view the ' Middle Iranian ' period and the language of the official classes for the local idioms of Parthia and Media could not have been the same.

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Z.-k. thinks it my duty to reconsider my hypothesis in the light of the suggestion that the original which Gurgānī turned into Persian verse was in the dialect of Fahla, similar to the specimens of *fahlaviyāt* which Qays al-Rāzī quotes in his *Mu'jam* (written in 614/1217) and which remind one of the *du-baytīs* of Bābā Ṭāhir.

I consider this new suggestion very improbable in view of the fact that all we know of the *fahlaviyāt* consists of purely lyrical quatrains, while the plot of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* is a complicated tale of two noble lovers and is closely connected with the background of court life and the feudal rivalries of local princes. Such a *roman courtois* was entirely beyond the scope of the authors of the modest *fahlaviyāt* which are known to us.

In the twenties of the eleventh century the Middle Persian script was still used in funerary inscriptions of the princes of Ṭabaristān close to Gurgānī's native country. According to Gurgānī the text of the original story was used by students desirous to learn Pahlavi,[1] but if 'Pahlavi' refers to the *fahlaviyāt*, what need would there have been to study the local speech for the people who naturally spoke it from their childhood?

(B) The reviewer thinks that as the original story was in the 'local language of Fahla' it was natural for the towns of Fahla to be mentioned in it; as to Khurāsān, Gurgān, etc., their names may have been added to give more substance to the tale; on the other hand the trend of my reasoning has been chiefly (*bīshtar*) geographical and I was unable to support it by arguments based on 'the literature, beliefs, habits, and customs' of the Arsacid period. Therefore, the views of Christensen concerning the imaginary character of the subject acquire some attractiveness (*jilva*).

In point of fact the pre-Islamic features of the story, such as the marriage of Virō with his sister are very striking and they rendered the poem particularly objectionable to Muslims on religious grounds. Was then the tale invented under the Sasanians? This would be improbable on several grounds. Minovi has rightly remarked that *Vīs-u Rāmīn* has no common points with the *Shāh-nāma* (based on the official Sasanian *Khwatāy-nāmak*). In addition to what was said in §6 of my 1946 article ('Political organization') one should again stress the obvious difference between the unsettled background of struggles and insubordination of the provincial lords (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*), described in the poem, and the centralized tendencies of the Sasanian state. The latter was supported by the Zoroastrian clergy, which upheld and exalted the throne, unless its holders were 'sinners' in opposition to the religious caste. The attitude of the poem towards king Mobad is devoid of any adulation. An opinion has been expressed that the story might have been inspired by popular resentment against the ruling institution, though one need not go so far with the poem the main purpose of which is to depict human passions as a law unto themselves.

Religious prescriptions and rites penetrated all of the social life under the Sasanians. For that period we must definitely doubt the occurrence of such procedures as the informal betrothal by Shahrō of her two children, performed without any intervention of *mobads* and witnesses.[2] This example alone,

[1] One can understand such a nostalgic tendency at the time of Arab and Turkish invasions.

[2] The Georgian version, see O. Wardrop's translation, p. 14, is free: 'There is no need to adorn the bride. God Himself has adorned her. Neither should there be any dowry (reading *mahr* for *muhr-i mobad*) Shahrō placed their hands one in the other and began to prepare for the wedding' (in Persian text: *mihmanī* 'banquet, reception').

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described in the poem with great lucidity (Min., 44, Maḥ., 32), seems to testify to pre-Sasanian ' habits and beliefs '.

(C) The reviewer wonders how a Parthian story could have survived unobserved during the Sasanian period and have been left unnoticed by Arab translators from Pahlavi to emerge at the time of Gurgānī. The answer would be that the spirit of the story and its association with the Parthian period were repugnant to the Sasanians. Already Nöldeke had shown that in Sasanian times the names and the records of such Parthian heroes as Gotarzes (Gūdarz) were projected into the mythical epoch of the Kayānid kings.[1]

The entertaining story had to stand on its merits and being unofficially transmitted, probably through the medium of popular story-tellers and bards,[2] must have lost many of its original details and incorporated some extraneous matter,[3] and thus we are obliged to content ourselves with the analysis of the hints which have stood the test of time in the background of the remarkable poem. Even the official history of the Arsacids still presents many unsolved problems, and in *Vīs-u Rāmīn* we may recognize the clear features of the epoch but not consider it as a kind of chronicle.

(D) The reviewer strictly adheres to the remark of S. H. Taqizadeh (quoted in my 1946 appendix) concerning the marriage of Vīrō and Vīs in the month of Ādhurmāh (آذرماه),[4] which ' owing to the march of time ' fell then in the beginning of spring (*nau-bahārān*), see Min., 44, Maḥ., 33. If one takes the month Ādhur (later Ādhar) for the tenth month of the era established under the last Sasanian, Yezdegerd III, and beginning on 16 June 632 (old style), then, counting backwards, the only period during which any day of Ādhar happened to coincide with the spring (i.e. the time between 20 March and 19 April) was between the years A.D. 392 and 512 (old style).[5]

The conclusion would then be that the events, *or* perhaps, as S. H. Taqizadeh admits, the composition of the original version of the story, took place in *Sasanian* times. The latter supposition would be admissible, but the former would be in contradiction with what we know of the character and spirit of the Sasanian period (see above).

On the other hand, should my assumption of the Parthian origin of the plot of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* hold good, the problem before us would take on a different aspect: the calendar indication of Gurgānī would refer not to the late Sasanian

[1] cf. Sir J. C. Coyajee in ' The house of Gotarzes, a chapter of Parthian history in the Shah-nameh ', *JASB*, NS, XXVIII, 1932, No. 10, 207-24.

[2] Apart from the reference to the Pahlavi original Gurgānī (Min., 28, Maḥ., 21) begins his narrative with a difficult verse hinting at some additional (?) versions: ' I have found written (for ?) evening entertainments (*samarhā*), among the words of the narrators (*rāviyān*) in (their) reports (*khabarhā*) ' that there was a king, etc. This passage would be clearer if one could change the places of the rhymes: ' I have found written in the reports (*khabarhā*) on what was said by narrators during the evening entertainments '.

[3] See, for example, the references to ' Khusrau '. Even if some of the sayings ought to be attributed to the mythical Kay-Khusrau (Minovi, pp. 129, 504), at least one of the references (ch. xciii, v. 14) in a simile (due apparently to Gurgānī himself) quotes the names of the *Sasanian* Khusrau and Shīrīn. Cf. ch. ciii, v. 4: Nūsharvān.

[4] In Z.-k. wrongly: *Ābān*.

[5] This computation is based on the principle that in applying the era of Yezdegerd (A.Y.) backwards (B.Y.) one has to take it that in every fourth year the year began one day later. Thus the beginning of the era (1 Farvardīn) was on 16 June 632, while the year 4 B.Y. began on 17 June. Cf. S. H. Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian calendars*, 1938, 6, and his letter of 26 October 1961.

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era of Yezdegerd III but to the quite different calendar used under the Parthians, namely the Seleucid or the indigenous Arsacid era.[1]

I am incompetent to make any definite pronouncements on this still obscure subject. In Neugebauer's table 30A of the Seleucid era one finds two additional months Adār following the regular 12 months. In table 8 ('Hellenistische Kalender in Vorderasien') Adār is the sixth month and is said to begin on 1 March (just before the seventh month Nīsān which is equated with April).

The useful index of rare words given in Maḥjūb's edition, p. 469, mentions the term Ādhār (آذار) used by Gurgānī three times as a synonym of spring.

(*a*) Minovi, 369, Maḥjūb, 269: 'I am Ādhār and you the Naurūz; in any case these two come together'.

(*b*) Min., 379, Maḥ., 283: 'I shall weep as an Ādhār cloud'.

(*c*) Min., 481, Maḥ., 322: '(The world) is never uniform: now it is like Ādhār, and now like winter'.

Maḥjūb, quoting the *Lughat-i nafīsī* and the *Burhān-i qāṭi'*[2] writes: 'Ādhār is the sixth month of the Syrian (*suryānī*) calendar which the Arabs call *shuhūr al-Rūm* ("months of the *Byzantines") and which corresponds to the first month of spring'. What is meant here is apparently some variant of the Seleucid era which we have mentioned above.

In view of these facts it is permissible to ask whether Ādhur (Ādhar)-māh in Gurgānī's text is not an abbreviation[3] of Ādhār used *metri causa* (cf. *āgāh āgah*), although Ādhār may be a non-Iranian[4] loan-word, while *ādhur* 'fire' is Iranian. The poet himself seems to be somewhat astonished at the unusual identification of Ādhur-māh known from the era of Yezdegerd with the spring, whereas for the original Ādhār this would be natural. Thus the placing of the marriage of Vīrō and Vīs in the period between A.D. 392 and 512[5] does not seem to be a foregone conclusion.

By the side of the mention of Ādhur-māh one might quote the description of the fearful omens of the sky on the night before Mobad penetrated into the castle of Vīs (ch. xxix, translated by F. Gabrieli and H. Massé). The poet displays his knowledge of the stars and their forebodings[6] but it would hardly be

[1] See Wroth, *Coins of Parthia*, 190, p. lxv (dates and eras); Minns, 'Parchments of the Parthian era from Avroman', *Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, xxxv, 1, 1915, 36–42 (on dating); Neugebauer, 'Hilfstafeln zur technischen Chronologie', in *Astronomische Nachrichten*, Kiel, 1937, Nos. 6250 and 6262; W. B. Henning, 'Mitteliranisch', in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, IV, 1, 1958, 28–9 (references); I. Dyakonov and V. Livshitz, *Dokumenti iz Nisi*, 1960. According to Henning, *Zoroaster*, 1951, 31, the Seleucid era was used even under the earlier Sasanians.

[2] See Mo'in's ed., I, 22: 'the name of the first month of spring of the year of the Rūmīs when the sun stands in the zodiac of Pisces (*Ḥūt*)'.

[3] Or some misunderstanding in Gurgānī's sources.

[4] Professor J. B. Segal kindly writes to me (11 March 1962) 'Adar has been derived from Akkadian "be darkened, eclipsed". But the more satisfactory derivation is from the term for "threshing floor", which is its connotation in Aramaic and Syriac. It must at one time, then, have occurred at the season of threshing, in, that is, the early summer. But from early times—well before 1000 B.C.—Adar is used of the month which normally falls before the month of the spring equinox'.

[5] Some further precision might be derived by specialists from Gurgānī's indication that the day of Ādhur-māh was called *Dey*. In the Zoroastrian calendar this name (in Middle Persian spelt *Dadv*) was applied to the 8th, 15th, and 23rd days of each month. As is known, however, the Zoroastrian canon was established first under the Arsacids. The Georgian translation by O. Wardrop, pp. 14–16, only says that the day of betrothal was chosen by astrologers.

[6] Much less sophisticated is the description of a stormy night in Firdausī's introduction to the story of Bīzhan and Manīzha (Tehran ed., IV, 1055).

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possible to interpret his poetical images as astronomical observations forming part of the original tale.

(E) The reviewer introduces my hypothesis as ' attractive ' but his further doubts and arguments, if accepted, would disrupt my constructions. What would then take the place of my ' mosaics ' (*munabbat-kārī*) ? Z.-k. admits that it is impossible to seek affinity (*qarābat*) between Cornwall and Fahla, but thinks that the stories of Rāmīn and Tristan may have a common origin. Some scenes in Gurgānī's poem are reminiscent of ' Daphnis and Chloe ' and of ' Flour (Floris) and Blancheflour '. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (!) the similitude of the name of Rāma with Rāmīn cannot be accidental and the separation of Rāma from his wife Sītā offers in our case some useful parallels, etc. I am afraid these literary comparisons are vague and haphazard and would set the remarkable romance of Persian literature out of Time and Space.

4. *Gurgānī and Toghril-bek* (*M. Molé*)

The most recent approach to our subject is by Dr. Marian Molé. His article ' *Vīs-u Rāmīn* et l'histoire seldjoukide ' appeared in *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, N.S., IX, 1959, 1–30. All the references given by the author are to Minovi's edition.

In his first paragraph he makes the following points :

(1) the archaic (pre-Islamic) character of the customs described in the romantic story (*roman courtois*) is certain ;

(2) nobody will deny ' la résonnance spécifiquement parthe ' of certain personal names in *Vīs-u Rāmīn* [1] ;

(3) more doubtful is the assumption that the scarce political allusions of the poem reflect the conditions of the Parthian epoch ;

(4) the similarity of terms in which the poet refers to the kingdom of Mobad, and those in which he in the preface describes the ' nascent empire ' of the Seljūqs are striking.

Further on these theses are maintained with more and more stress on the dependence of Gurgānī on the events of which, by the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, he was witness. They must have left a deep impression on the poet for, as M. Molé puts it imaginatively, ' toujours et partout, et en Iran plus peut-être qu'ailleurs, un élément mystique préside à l'établissement d'un nouvel état '. He then proceeds to explain the historical and geographical background of the poem by the poet's vision of Toghril-bek's successes.[2]

The record of events which Gurgānī describes in the special panegyric to Toghril (Minovi's ed., 11–15) and in the account of the capture of Iṣfahān (Min., 17–21) merit the attention of historians. Until now these chapters had been examined only by Badī' al-zamān (*Sukhan va sukhanvarān*, II, 1, 9–12).

[1] In the subsequent explanations this point is not further touched upon.

[2] In the verse quoted at this occasion : *ba daulat shāh-i shāhān shud chu Jamshēd* there is no *iḍafat* after *daulat*, and instead of ' il partit pour l'empire du roi des rois comme Jamshed ', one should translate : ' by a fortunate chance he became a king of kings like Jamshēd '.

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M. Molé [1] speaks in more detail of Toghrīl's campaigns in the west, but slightly forces the pace of Clio. In the conclusions of my 1947 instalment I gave a warning against such an acceleration. M. Molé himself (p. 3) has doubts on the reality of the ' souveraineté universelle ' which, in his mind, Gurgānī attributes to Toghrīl. ' Avouons-le, la possession de l'Iran et quelques razzias dans les pays limitrophes ne sauraient à nos yeux justifer une telle prétention. On est encore bien éloigné de l'empire achéménide, du royaume sassanide ou du caliphat à ses bons jours '.[2] He then proceeds : ' Et pourtant . . . ne jugeons pas si vite. Une fiction légale [*sic*] se chargera de suppléer ici aux lacunes et, dès ce moment, l'empire seldjoukide apparaîtra comme s'étendant sur la moitié de la terre '.

The desire to make Gurgānī look through Seljūq glasses leads to some curious *qui pro quos*. Rāmīn (sent by his elder brother king Mobad) pacifies the west : from Iṣfahān he controls Gurgān, Rayy, Ahwāz, and Baghdād. M. Molé (p. 16) writes : ' l'image est claire et ne laisse pas de doute. Le frère aîné à Marv, le cadet à Isfahan ; s'agit-il de Mobad et de Rāmīn ? Ou de Čaghrï-bek et de Toghrīl-bek ? Des deux sans doute, et l'histoire de ceux-ci explique ce que l'on raconte sur ceux-là '. But thus Mobad becomes a synthetic personality because in the following paragraph the empire of Mobad is compared with that of Toghrīl. On p. 20 the variety of origin of the ladies invited by Mobad is explained by the necessity for the poet to exalt the power of the king of Marv. Was Čaghrï-bek meant in this case too and would the comparison with Mobad be flattering for Toghrīl's elder brother ?

As M. Molé several times (pp. 20, 30) repeats that his thesis concerning ' le cadre historico-géographique du roman ' is opposite to mine, I cannot hope to convince him of the utility of my research ; nor do I wish to engage in long polemics. I shall therefore present here only some general considerations in support of my views.

(1) Hardly any Persian epic or romantic poem does not begin with praises to God, to the reigning prince or king, and to the patron, but a line should be drawn between such introductions and the real stories.[3] In *Vīs-u Rāmīn* too the real poem opens with ch. viii which bears the clear title ' Beginning of the story ' (*āghāz-i dāstān*) and explains how Gurgānī found it in written form (*nivishta*).

(2) The poet is explicit about the way in which he was going to adorn the somewhat dry original with his resources of rhetoric and poetry. Such parts of the poem as the exchange of letters between the two lovers are definitely

[1] He uses the recent works of Cl. Cahen (1948) and B. Spuler (1952). Somewhat inexactly he calls Arslān-khān (who sent an embassy to Toghrīl) ' Arslan le Tatare '. This Qara-khānid ruler was identified by Badī' al-zamān who quoted Ibn al-Athīr, *sub anno* A.H. 408. On this ruler of Kāshghar see in more detail Barthold, *Semirechyé*, Engl. tr. 96, who assigns to his reign the years 423–48/1032–56.

[2] Here the memory is omitted of the Parthian empire which G. Rawlinson in 1873 called ' The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy '.

[3] cf. Niẓāmī's dedications and the subjects of his poems.

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productions of his own inspiration. Some casual points in his new version of the story are obviously anachronistic, such as the mention of Baghdād and Qayrawān (which are Muslim foundations), or a reference to Khusrau and Shīrīn (ch. xciii, verse 14) in contrast to the other parts of the text devoid of any Sasanian reminiscences. The names of the beauties at Mobad's court may have been added *ad hoc* to increase the impression of Mobad's might, or, as I think, to suit the 'Khurāsānian' background of his basic dominions. On the other hand, it seems difficult to discover in the corpus of the poem any overflow of the panegyrics of the introduction.

(3) We had noticed the striking insignificance of the role which Fārs (that cradle of the Sasanians) plays in the poem, and the concentration of the events in northern Persia, and we have to consider the immutability of the geographical scheme. Any invasion from the east had to follow practically the same 'Khurāsānian road', and from Rayy one had to move to Iṣfahān, or Hamadān. Consequently the similitude of stages is no reason for accepting the latest possible version of events.

(4) Despite the theory developed in one of the historical works consulted by M. Molé, according to which the Seljūqs came as expected rulers, or even liberators (*Erlöser*),[1] it is hard to believe that the magic spectacle of a nascent state should have moved Gurgānī to compose a disguised glorification of the conquerors. How would these restorers of orthodoxy have liked to see themselves connected with a plot some details of which horrified even the bold satirist 'Ubayd Zākānī ?

(5) It is true that in his introduction Gurgānī paid his tribute to the new Cæsar. He did it with a liberal hand for he lived at a dangerous time, and he himself describes the horrible punishments inflicted on the disloyal elements (*bad-andishān*) after the capture of Iṣfahān (ch. v, verses 18-19).

It is quite probable that Gurgānī held some minor post at Toghrīl-bek's court or secretariat.[2] For seven months his sleep in Iṣfahān was broken by the trumpets and drums announcing the successes of Toghrīl's armies (ch. iii, v. 88). These rejoicings could not leave Gurgānī unaffected, and yet, when the hour came of the Sultan's departure for Hamadān,[3] the poet did not follow the king of kings. He vaguely speaks of some business (*kārī*) which detained him in Iṣfahān. M. Molé too seems perplexed by this separation from the king whom Gurgānī 'aurait dû suivre'.

(6) Here suddenly the real patron of the poet appears on the stage : the young 'Amīd Muẓaffar Nīshāpūrī appointed governor of Iṣfahān by Toghrīl-bek.

[1] See my remarks in *Göttingenische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CCVII, 3-4, 1953, 197.

[2] His nearness to the Sultan should not be exaggerated, as M. Molé does when he translates the verse describing the poet's conversation with his real patron, the 'Amīd who *pursīd az khudāvandī rahī-rā* 'il interrogea l'esclave sur le maître', instead of 'because of his (the 'Amīd's) lordliness he asked (his) slave (i.e. Gurgānī)', etc.

[3] This campaign is not recorded by the historians, though it may have been required by some disobedience of Toghrīl's half-brother Ibrāhīm Yināl for whom M. Molé does not seem to have an opposite number in the poem.

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This high and trusted official ought to have inspired Gurgānī with the sense of duty but he himself encouraged him to stay in Iṣfahān till the spring and proposed to him to write a poem on Vīs and Rāmīn, ' a very beautiful story which everybody loves in these parts '. This again looks like a mystery: how could a governor of Persian nationality delay the departure of Gurgānī by offering him a subject completely unconnected with administrative affairs? The conversation with the 'Amīd is reported in the light of purely literary interests. There is no hint in the text that by accepting the offer and writing his ' charmant poème d'amour ' Gurgānī might please the court, or regain some favour.

(7) No doubt is left in the poem about the 'Amīd being the real dedicatee of the poem. His praise in the introduction is paramount and it is still further increased in the conclusion (omitted in the Indian edition) in which Gurgānī mentions by name the three infant sons of the governor and discovers in them every kind of ability and attraction.

To sum up: all these details make me doubt that the author of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* meant to write a disguised record of Seljūq operations. His introduction can hardly be connected with the main story which he undertook to retell with all kinds of poetic embellishments.

M. Molé makes very few suggestions for the interpretation of the ancient elements of Gurgānī's text (see above points (1) and (2) of his theses) but I wish to take this opportunity for two new suggestions.

(*a*) My 1946–7 instalments may have misled M. Molé in interpreting the name of one of the secondary personages of the poem. I spoke of *K.shmyr-yal* whose name M. Molé explains as ' the hero of Kashmīr '. However, as I see now, it is better to read *K.shmyr-i yal*, i.e. ' K.shmyr the hero ', in which case K.shmyr is a personal name. I think this correct reading reinforces my suggestion that the hero might have been called *Kishmēr*, in honour of the cypress tree said to have been planted by Zoroaster in the Khurāsānian village of that name. As a counterpart to it one might recall the name *Sarv* ' cypress ', cf. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, p. 290.

(*b*) Some difficulties with the identification of the place called *Khūzān* still remain. M. Molé (p. 23) draws attention to ch. iii, v. 63, where the poet describing Toghrīl's expeditions couples Khūzān with Mōṣul (!) and adds: ' il semble qu'il faille le chercher un peu plus au nord qu'Ahwāz '. He even opines that the contempt with which the birthplace of the cunning nurse of Vīs is mentioned may contain ' quelque vague souvenir du matriarcat élamite '.

In point of fact several Khūzān are known in Iran, see Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, IV, 410. It is possible that in his introduction Gurgānī uses Khūzān as a synonym of Khūzistān, but such use does not coincide with the location of Khūzān in the poem itself. South of Marv Yāqūt mentions two flourishing villages of this name near Herāt and Panjdih (on the present-day frontier between Afghanistan and the republic of Turkmenia). In this connexion one detail may be noted. In her letter to Rāmīn (ch. 87, verse 307) Vīs reproaches him for having taken the nurse for a *gharcha va nādān*. In common use this might mean ' a rustic ignoramus ', but originally *gharcha* (in Tājīkī *galcha*) refers to ' mountaineers ', and the mountainous tract forming the watershed between

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the river of Herāt (Harī-rūd) and the basin of Marv is even now called Gharchistān, ' the country of (the rough) mountaineers '. It is tempting to look for the nurse's country in that region.

I hope this long discussion of the new suggestions concerning the interpretation of *Vīs-u Rāmīn* may prove useful for future research on the poem of Gurgānī. A number of additional remarks will be found in the revised text of my original article, now sixteen years old.

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